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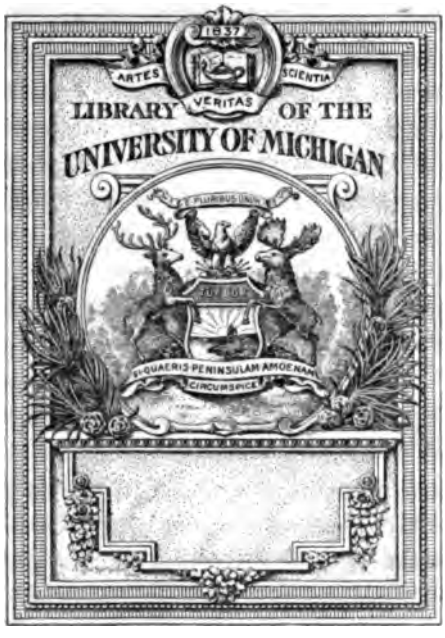
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MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

OF

CARDINAL DE BERNIS

VOLUME II.

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La Tour.

Louis XV.

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

OF

CARDINAL DE BERNIS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE

Translated by

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS FROM THE ORIGINAL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

OF

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

PART SECOND (CONTINUED).

X.

1757. — The Marquis de Fraigne sent as Envoy to Zerbst. — His Abduction, and all that relates to that Affair. — Negotiations of the Comte de Stainville at Vienna successfully ended by Treaty with the Duke of Brunswick, August, 1757. — The Capitulation of Kloster-Zeven and its results.

I HAD scarcely assumed the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs in June, 1757, when a head-clerk in charge of the department of Poland, the Porte, and Russia, spoke to me in favour of the Marquis de Fraigne, a young gentleman born in Provence, of good family, whom M. Rouillé had already mentioned to me as a man who was suitable to be employed; letting me know at the same time that it would be useful to the king's service if he were accredited to the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst and her son, the reigning duke. This princess, sister of the King of Sweden, and mother of the Grand-duchess of Moscow (now the reigning Empress Catherine II.), had been rather handsome in her youth and was still a woman of gallantry; she was not wanting in either cleverness or intrigue, and was thought to have an ascendency over the mind of her daughter, the grand-

duchess.[1] The young Marquise de Fraigne, who had been in Berlin with his cousin, M. de Valory, and whom the King of Prussia regarded as a man of dangerous mind, had spent some time at the Court of Zerbst, where he had pleased the princess-dowager to such a degree that they were supposed to be secretly married.

I knew of this romance, and I proposed to the king to accredit this young man to the Court of Zerbst by a simple letter, written by me in his Majesty's name, to the princess and to the duke, her son, both of whom piqued themselves on their attachment to France. I gave instructions to the Marquis de Fraigne, the principal point of which was to manage the mind of the grand-duchess, — in view of the death of the Empress Elizabeth, who was threatened with cancer of the womb. This death might change the whole system of Russia and upset that of the war.

I had succeeded in getting the grand-chancellor, Bestucheff, a great partisan of the King of England and the King of Prussia, dismissed. His place was filled by the vice-chancellor, Voromsoff, a quiet man, attached to the new alliance, of which he had been a promoter. The Marquis de l'Hôpital, the king's ambassador to the Court of Saint-Petersburg, had won the good graces of the Empress Elizabeth; he managed the young Court of Russia with great discretion, for the empress viewed with displeasure those who attached themselves to it; but it was all the more important for us not to be disliked by the future rulers because the grand-duchess had shown much liking for the English minister, Sir Charles Williams, before the adhesion of Russia to the Treaty of Versailles. The latter had put

[1] Sophia-Frederica, who was rebaptized Catherine-Alexewna on her marriage with Peter, Grand-duke of Moscow, and became at his death the Empress Catherine II.

in his place, on leaving Saint Petersburg, the young Count Stanislas Poniatowski, now King of Poland. Comte Brühl, prime-minister of the then King of Poland, Elector of Saxony, a showy, intriguing man, had accredited Stanislas Poniatowski to the Court of the Empress Elizabeth, also with the view of managing the young Court in view of all events; and in so doing it may be said that he was right. But the Comte de Broglie, our ambassador at Warsaw, whom Stanislas Poniatowski had displeased, and who managed matters in Poland much more after his own devices than in conformity with the instructions I had sent him and the ideas of the Courts allied with ours, worked upon the King of Poland so much that Poniatowski was recalled. The grand-duchess was afflicted, and I believe she has never to this day forgiven the Comte de Broglie, although she has had time to efface from her memory that passing vexation.

These details are not unnecessary in order to comprehend how wise and politic it was to send the Marquis de Fraigne to the Court of Zerbst, he having the whole confidence of the dowager-princess and she being able to turn in our favour the inclinations of her daughter the grand-duchess who tended, herself, toward England. Besides which, the Court of Zerbst was in close proximity to Magdeburg, a place we were likely to besiege, where the King of Prussia kept his arsenal and had stored his treasury and all his military resources; it was therefore very interesting for us to be informed of what was taking place in this centre of operations. But the mission of the Marquis de Fraigne was certainly dangerous: ambition and love made him ardently desire it. The service of the king could only be the gainer by putting to profit those two passions which were united to the greatest zeal for the glory of his Majesty, and especially for the humiliation of the King of Prussia, against

whom the Marquis de Fraigne declared he had cause for complaint.

He was especially directed to burn his instructions in case any attack was made upon his person. The King of Prussia divined what they contained; he tried to have the Marquis de Fraigne carried off a few days after his arrival at Zerbst. The latter defended himself, after burning his instructions, ciphers, and all his papers with admirable courage and presence of mind; the Duke of Zerbst, at the head of his guard, came to his deliverance and lodged him in his own palace. A few days after this fruitless attack, his Prussian Majesty sent four thousand men and cannon, with orders to carry off the Marquis de Fraigne by force and take him to Magdeburg. The Duke of Zerbst generously wished to expose himself to a siege, but the Marquis de Fraigne, with more generosity still, gave himself up to save the unfortunate duke from total ruin. The latter complained in vain of such violation of the rights of individuals, and of the insult offered to one of the most ancient and illustrious princely houses in Europe. The King of Prussia steadily refused to give up his prisoner; every means of fear, and all imaginable tricks were resorted to to make the marquis reveal his secrets; dungeon, threats, promises were all useless, and he was not released until after the peace in 1762.

The Princess of Zerbst, like a heroine of romance, succeeded in bribing the jailer who watched the prison of her favourite, to whom she was thus enabled to send women's clothes, by means of which he escaped from Magdeburg; his secretary, wearing his clothes, had the generosity to remain in his place in the prison. If love and gratitude had not made it a law of honour with the fugitive to go to the Court of Zerbst on his way to Hamburg, the marquis would have been saved and his fortune made, because I should have had his

services recognized. But he was seen by the guard whom the King of Prussia had put in Zerbst, seized and taken back to a dungeon in Magdeburg, where he was kept for more than a year, and then transferred, until the peace, to the citadel of that place.

He declares that if Maréchal de Richelieu had marched on Magdeburg when the King of Prussia assembled his army to fight the Prince de Soubise and the imperial army, he could have made himself master of the place, where there were seven thousand prisoners, Austrians and Russians, and only eighteen hundred raw recruits to guard them. Magdeburg is a very strong place on the land side; but the citadel, which is defended by the Elbe, has only a simple wall, and towards autumn the river has, usually, not more than two feet of water in it.

If the Marquis de Fraigne's opinion is not correct as to the taking of Magdeburg, it is, at least, very reasonable as regards the diversion which this attack would have made; the King of Prussia would certainly have been forced to abandon M. de Soubise, to go to the succour of the strongest support of his power. M. de Fraigne insists also that he notified Maréchal de Richelieu of the condition in which Magdeburg was left; but the latter preferred to devastate the principality of Halberstadt, without accumulating provisions for the winter in his rear. There are some things in great affairs which seem incredible; but they are nearly always explainable by motives of self-interest.

The Marquis de Fraigne, on his return from his long captivity, was very poorly rewarded for his zeal. He made an imprudent journey to the Court of Vienna, together with useless and ill-devised efforts to go to Russia and solicit the kindness of the Empress Catherine; but the latter did not desire to see the lover of her mother (who, meanwhile, had

died in Paris) and the enemy of her then ally, the King of Prussia.

With regard to the Princess of Zerbst; she came to Aix-la-Chapelle, under pretence of her health, in the summer of 1758; she begged the king to allow her to live in Paris, which his Majesty could not refuse, in spite of the jealousy her sojourn in France would cause in the Empress Elizabeth, the King of Sweden, and even the Court of Vienna. As long as I was in the ministry she followed my advice; after my exile she was abandoned to herself; she then dropped into bad company, had dissolute adventures, and chose for her lovers men who were little esteemed. Her credit was lost in a moment; she died in the shame of an old coquette, and her jewels, which she had pledged to the Marquis de Fraigne, never reached him.

The Comte de Stainville lost no time on his arrival in Vienna. We cannot without injustice refuse him credit for intellect, penetration, many graces, and gaiety; but his principal talent is for rushing matters on, shortening formalities (which are often useful) at the risk of difficulties that may result from haste and too great confidence; he perceives quickly, he sees clearly; but he does not sufficiently bring together his ideas, and he aims much more for celebrity than for reputation.

The battle of Hastembeck and the retreat of the Duke of Cumberland to the camp at Stade, where, it was said the King of England had stored his treasure, left uncovered the German States of his Britannic Majesty and the duchy of Brunswick. In this position, the Duke of Brunswick, who had a minister in Vienna, proposed arrangements to the Comte de Stainville, by which the duke promised to withdraw his troops from the Hanoverian army, disarm them, give up to us his forts, artillery, and arsenals, and furnish

provisions for our troops during the winter at a price to be agreed upon. This convention was rapidly negotiated, concluded, and ratified by the Duke of Brunswick, September 20, 1757. It had results that were very considerable: the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel asked to treat with us and offered to put his troops in our pay. The Duke of Saxe-Gotha, the Count of Lippe, and other allies of England did the same; so that from my cabinet at Versailles I reduced the Hanoverian army to eighteen thousand men, who were obliged to cross the Elbe and join the King of Prussia in Saxony, and prepare during the winter for a siege of Magdeburg. Besides all this, the Duke of Mechlenburg gave up to us the fortress of Dömitz on the Elbe, by means of which we could give a hand to the Swedes.

The Comte de Montazet, whom the king had sent to serve in the army of the empress-queen, had won the confidence of that princess, also that of the ministers and of Prince Charles of Lorraine; he had military talents, and the art of giving them their full value. I had instructed him, before his departure, to keep the Austrians fighting the King of Prussia constantly, in order to destroy the old troops of his Prussian Majesty and reduce the latter to recruits, whom it would now be difficult to raise in Germany, as our troops occupied the greater part of those States. The great princes of the Empire having given us their troops on payment of subsidies, the empress-queen could not lack men, and when the King of Prussia was reduced to fight with raw recruits, his armies would no longer have the advantage over ours in discipline.

M. de Montazet acquitted himself of his mission with much courage, dexterity, and luck. Eleven great affairs took place during this campaign; the King of Prussia lost the generals in whom he had most confidence; and all these

things combined formed a happy prospect of brilliant and rapid success.

The Russian army was set in motion, and although General Apraxin who commanded, being won over by the English, did not desire to conquer, his troops, after being beaten by the Prussians and pursued with too much ardour, intrenched themselves behind their army waggons, and obtained, in spite of their general, a signal victory, which would have had the greatest results had Apraxin been willing to profit by it.

At the same time, Denmark, which had never been brought to declare itself to the Diet of the Empire as against the King of Prussia, being allied to France by a treaty of subsidies, desiring secretly the humiliation of the Court of Berlin, fearing still more the aggrandizement of the House of Austria, that of Sweden, and, above all, that of Russia, began to temporize, and to convey a hope of taking sides and making common cause with us; but her principal object was to play a part in the mediation for peace, whether in Germany (which was difficult) or in our private quarrel with the Court of London. It will be seen under what circumstances Denmark consented to declare herself; no one in the king's Council believed that I could bring her to do so.

All these successes, and all these happy arrangements existed until the moment of the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven; it seemed as if nothing could prevent the plan of the war from succeeding; the second campaign would have led us direct to its fortunate conclusion. The king would have played a grander rôle than any of his predecessors; he would have marked the limits for the weakening and the aggrandizement of States; and his moderation would not have been pushed, as in the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, beyond its proper boundaries by the real advantages he secured to

France and to his House; his glory would have concealed our internal misery; the credit of France, its reputation, would have risen; and by following better maxims, whether in finances, or military discipline, or the restoration of morals, I had every hope that in ten years the kingdom would have recovered its ancient splendour. I was amazed that such great things could have been done with instruments as feeble as those we put to the work, and that, in spite of the anarchy in the government, in spite of the intrigues, insubordination, greed, and lack of talent in our generals, so great a project could have succeeded. I said to myself, reflecting on the results of my negotiations: "Poor posterity! how mistaken you will be if you judge by the grandeur of events the grandeur of the men who prepared them!"

The king was now master of the whole country from the Meuse and the Sarre; without fighting we had reduced to nothingness the army of the King of England; I had incorporated nearly all the forces of the princes of the Empire into our armies; no intervening power could cut our communication with the Lower Rhine; we occupied Hesse; we could have been masters of Frankfort at the first summons; the courses of the rivers and streams were at our disposal to defend or to provision ourselves. All this was real; it was done without striking a blow; and yet I did not feel wholly assured; I had predicted to Comte de Staremberg that the project might perish through the multiplication of the branches of the great tree, the union and unity of which it would be so difficult to maintain. Moreover, the efforts of France and all the allied powers were too great; it was easy to foresee that money would lack; Sweden, internally divided, could not act without subsidies; the Empress of Russia might weary of supporting the burden of a war on slight

subsidies and with no hope of Russian aggrandizement at the peace.

The Council of Vienna was inwardly as much opposed to the alliance with our Court as was that of Versailles. The ministers and generals saw nothing in it but the reversal of the good old principles; they all conspired in their hearts against the success of the war. Vienna would contribute nothing to the influence of Count Kaunitz; neither would Versailles do aught to confirm the power of Mme. de Pompadour or assist in my elevation. The neutral powers feared lest the House of France and that of Austria should become the sole real powers of Europe; the Protestant princes feared to be crushed; the Italian princes feared to be kept waiting for an audience in the antechambers of king and empress; Spain herself could not see without uneasiness the ascendency which France was about to gain in the European system. I felt that this inward volcano was awaiting only some event to burst forth. There was no time to lose in striking decisive blows; above all, it was necessary not to commit great blunders — and they were committed, at the very moment we had least reason to expect them; and this we shall presently see.

I will only add here that the minister of War, M. de Paulmy, in making sure of certain forts belonging to the old Landgrave of Hesse, did not think of obliging him to evacuate the fortress of Rheinsfeld on the Rhine between Bingen and Coblentz, in which he kept a garrison, and that garrison was changed twice, passing through the quarters of our army, without our officers informing themselves of where these disguised troops were going. This seems incredible; for Rheinsfeld was able to stop all convoys coming down the Rhine with supplies for the subsistence of our army. It was not until the end of the second campaign that

the Marquis de Castries, under orders from Maréchal de Belleisle, seized the place successfully.

The Duke of Cumberland said after the battle of Hastembeck: "Maréchal d'Estrées and I are very unfortunate; he commands an army of a hundred thousand thieves, and I an army of forty thousand cowards." Nevertheless, those very cowards, as soon as they were under the orders of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, trained in the school of the King of Prussia, manœuvred marvellously; and our own hundred thousand thieves observed strict discipline as soon as they were under the orders of Maréchal de Broglie. It must be said in praise of our soldiers that they never did wrong in this war when well commanded, and in a war so shameful for the nation, so prejudicial to and so destructive of all projects formed, no misfortunes can be attributed to ill-luck; they came about, one and all, through our own fault and by a network of intrigues that were equally criminal and unpunished.

The Comte de Stainville was amazed at Vienna that with the favour that I enjoyed I could not force the military power to second in a better manner the political plan; he did not know then, as he knew later, that I was never given anything but the influence of my own office, and that I had no influence whatever on the other departments. I had made the plan of the war, but they never even pretended that its execution depended on me; so inconsistent is the jealousy of power! The finance department had the authority to make me break my pledges for the payment of subsidies; that of war to abandon with impunity the political plan. I shall speak later of the conduct which the finance department pursued towards me, and of the plan which I proposed to sustain it during the war. It may be said that the cabinet did political miracles, but that the ministry of war multiplied its faults and punished none.

It could certainly be foreseen as a possible thing that France, with all her strength, might meet with failure against the Electorate of Hanover, but never as a probable or likely thing. . . . It is singular that all the Courts have missed their aim in this war: The King of Prussia, who began it, expected to operate a great revolution in Germany; to make the Empire part Protestant, part Catholic; to exchange States and take those which best suited him and would render his power more solid and more respectable. He has acquired much glory in resisting the great Courts of Europe and in often mastering them; he has made himself an immortal name among generals of armies and politicians; but he will leave his heir a power which is sustained and made formidable solely by the force of his genius, for its foundations are nothing so little as solid; he has ruined his people, exhausted his treasury, depopulated his States. A long peace, it may be said will repair these evils. Yes, but a long peace will bring him to old age; and when he can no longer command his armies they will not have the same vigour, nor the same wise guidance.

The empress-queen has increased during this war the idea we all had of her courage, her power, and the excellence of her troops, as well as the firmness of her resolutions; but she has not fulfilled a single one of the objects she proposed to herself.

Russia has shown to Europe the most invincible military force, and the worst in behaviour.

The Swedes have played, uselessly, an obscure and subordinate part; while ours has been shameful and extravagant.

Denmark has derived no benefit from its craft; it wanted to mediate, and it has missed it.

What evils the passions of princes cause to humanity! How the faults and the blunders of generals overthrow the

best-laid plans, even those that appear infallible! and this we are now to see.

Maréchal de Richelieu, to whom I had promised to tell the exact truth in my private letters, informing him of all that happened of importance, or that bore upon the success of his conduct, military and political, asked me one day, in a letter written in his own handwriting, if I "did not think it would be advantageous to the common cause, and to the king's interests, to abandon the region of Bremen and Verden to a part of the army of the allies, while the other should cross the Elbe and enter the duchy of Saxe-Lauenburg for the purpose of observing a stricter neutrality." He said that this idea had come into his head since he had realized how difficult it would be to force the camp at Stade. He added that he would not conceal from me that he had already "written something about it to President Ogier, the king's ambassador to the Court of Denmark, in order that the King of Denmark might employ himself in making such a project succeed; and in any case there was no objection to the step, because M. Ogier was a wise and enlightened man, and that if it were against his instructions to stake anything on Denmark, this minister was too wise to risk it."

At the time when Maréchal de Richelieu mentioned to me in this airy manner a project which seemed to be born at the nib of his pen as he finished the letter, the negotiations were already far advanced at Kloster-Zeven, and Comte de Lynar, sent by the King of Denmark to carry on this fine operation, was intoxicating the maréchal with incense and praise. He caused his bust in marble to be chiselled with a crown of laurel on the head, and it was also said that he was paid for his mediation by the King of England.

As for me, who never supposed the maréchal capable of such imprudence, I took his letter as a mere idea which

had come into his mind, and which he had imparted to me. I was also reassured by the opinion I had of President Ogier, who was too well informed and enlightened a man to be suspected of taking such an improper course. I therefore replied to the maréchal's letter by saying that "he had no other negotiation to make with the Hanoverians than to force their camp at Stade and tumble them into the Elbe;" adding that he must not forget how, in 1744, they had violated the convention of neutrality which the king had stipulated with them.

After writing this answer and despatching the courier, I carried Maréchal de Richelieu's letter to the king and told him of the answer I had made. He said, "You have answered properly; but you do not know the maréchal; what he announces as a mere project may be half executed already. Send a second courier ordering M. de Richelieu, from me, to open no negotiations, and to send at once to Fontainebleau (where the Court then was) all those that may have been begun."

I wrote under the eyes of the king and almost at his dictation, and the second courier started instantly. Two or three days later arrived the Duc de Duras, bearing the capitulation concluded and signed by the Duke of Cumberland and Maréchal de Richelieu. No surprise ever equalled mine, which was increased on seeing the manner in which the document was drawn up. I saw in an instant all the misfortunes that would come of so dangerous an imprudence. Maréchal de Richelieu had already informed the whole Court and Paris of his triumph by private letters; in these he spoke proudly of having forced a whole army to lay down its arms, and said that peace was made. During the same morning news arrived of a Russian victory, won, against the will of General Apraxin, over the Prussians, so that the public never doubted

that the two events would end the war; nearly all the ministers applauded the Duc de Richelieu's action; and the women, who expected soon to welcome back their husbands and lovers, were enchanted.

This capitulation was drawn up by the Duc de Duras, who was to be the bearer of it to Versailles. The Duc de Gesvres was dying at the time of the negotiation, and as his office of gentleman of the Bedchamber had been solicited by the Duc de Duras, there is every appearance that the negotiation was hurried for fear the vacant office might be given to some one else before he could reach Versailles. The king, however, made him wait some time for it, but ended by giving him the preference over two rivals because of a promise he had made to him, on his return from his embassy to Spain, of the captaincy of the Guards, which Mme. de Pompadour had later induced him to give to the Maréchal de Mirepoix.

To fully understand this affair of the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven, we must remember that Maréchal de Richelieu had no power whatever to negotiate with any Court or with any minister. Every general of an army has the power to make capitulations; he is master of imposing, in regard to troops and fortresses, such conditions as he may judge necessary and as the enemy may be willing to accept; he is accountable to the king only for his conduct in such matters. Military capitulations are not subject to ratification by the respective Courts, for as soon as there is need of ratification the capitulation changes its character and becomes a convention or treaty, for the conclusion of which it is necessary that the respective powers shall have been mutually communicated by the contracting parties and found in proper form. A general who makes a treaty against the tenor of the instructions he has received, and without being furnished with powers, commits a fault that is very

grave and often criminal. These principles are incontestable; it remains only to apply them to the convention of Kloster-Zeven.

1. We find in the preamble that the King of Denmark is recognized as mediator. The mediation of Denmark had never been in any way demanded by France; on the contrary, France would have opposed it, as being contrary to the intentions of the Courts of Vienna, Stockholm, and Russia, her allies.

2. Certain articles of the Convention of Kloster-Zeven are, it is true, concluded under guarantee of the word of honour of the Duke of Cumberland; but many others, depending on negotiations between Courts, are subject to the ratification of the said Courts. The first articles appear to have the character of a military capitulation, but the whole, taken together, requiring ratification, can belong only to an actual treaty. The Duke of Cumberland declares that he has as yet received no powers from his father, the King of England, and Maréchal de Richelieu, on his side, knew very well that Louis XV. would not give him any; thus the treaty was concluded without respective powers.

The capitulation of Kloster-Zeven was printed in full in a species of manifesto, which was scattered over Europe and translated into several languages. It was entitled "Parallel between the Conduct of the King and that of the Elector of Hanover, King of England." We have only to read that work to be convinced that all the faults that a minister and a general can commit are there accumulated. . . . The articles agreed upon under word of honour are to be, says the capitulation, executed as "soon as possible." . . . That "soon as possible" signifies nothing, because the enemy was seeking only to delude Maréchal de Richelieu, gain time, and make him lose the rest of the campaign; they could

always say they had not been able as yet to divide their army, that they were waiting for the approval of the King of England, and for the agreement of the respective Courts on the articles under negotiation. In this position, Maréchal de Richelieu would have spent the rest of the fine weather in guarding the Hanoverian army. If, on the contrary, he should continue the operations of the campaign and draw away from the army of the Duke of Cumberland, he left it on his flank or in his rear. In any case, the Hanoverians had set a trap for him, very dangerous for us and very useful to them, which he had not perceived.

It is without example that in a military capitulation, or in an actual treaty, the date of the execution of the accepted articles should not be fixed. The King of Prussia gave at Pirna, to all generals, a fine model of the only safe and sure manner of making an army capitulate. That model should have been followed; or at least the dates should have been fixed and hostages demanded.

It will certainly be agreed that while the convention of Kloster-Zeven is neither a military capitulation nor a diplomatic treaty, it must at least be regarded as a masterpiece of clumsiness and imprudence. The king might have disavowed it and brought its author to trial; but his Majesty, knowing that Maréchal de Richelieu, without waiting to be informed of the intentions of his Court, had departed with all his forces and marched fourteen days to reach the principality of Halberstadt, under pretence of repulsing Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who, at the head of six or seven thousand men, was driving back the Duc d'Ayen, then employed in levying contributions in the Brunswick territory. Consequently, his Majesty felt himself obliged to approve of his general's convention, and to order him to declare the same to the Duke of Cumberland.

It is true that the king heard with surprise of the negotiation, the treaty, the intervention of the King of Denmark, and the precipitate departure of Maréchal de Richelieu to Halberstadt, leaving, in order to compel the Hanoverian army to execute the capitulation, only six battalions and six squadrons of horse under M. de Villemeur, a former lieutenant-general, and a weak and temporizing man. Under these circumstances the king's Council was much embarrassed; for what course could they take? Disapprove the capitulation and order Maréchal de Richelieu to retrace his steps and fight the Duke of Cumberland? Not to speak of the length and difficulty of the return march, all France would have blamed the king for preferring uncertain battles to a treaty which gave us the whole of Hanover, thus separating the army of the allies, the greater part going into the duchy of Saxe-Lauenburg (to the great displeasure of the Swedes), the lesser occupying the small territory of Bremen and Verden. The public would not have failed to say that the king preferred to sacrifice men rather than conquer at one blow.

It is certain, however, that if I had been absolute master I should have rejected this monstrous capitulation, and recalled the general who had had the imprudence, or the malice, to conclude it.

But, as I said to the king, "*if this capitulation should be executed,* it will be advantageous and glorious for your Majesty; consequently we must adopt it, and send instructions to the maréchal to repair the blunders he has committed, and avoid those which spring from the convention itself." On this, the king, in Council, replied to the maréchal that he approved his conduct, accepted the convention, and would ratify it as soon as England had done so. He informed him of the treaty of the Duke of Brunswick, signed Sep-

tember 20, 1757, by which the duke agreed to disarm his troops; he made him feel how dangerous it was to leave the Hessians fully armed and assembled in Hesse, where we had our stores of flour and our bakery; and how much cause there was to fear that if disasters happened to us, these troops in our rear, armed, and in their ranks, would raise the mask and attack our communications and storehouses. He sent the maréchal instructions for correcting certain vicious points in the agreement, and for remedying the evil results it was likely to have, saying that, in order to reach these ends, he relied on his prudence and his experience.

The manner in which his Majesty gave these instructions was full of praise, moderation, and gentleness. The maréchal, who believed he had done a masterly thing, saw in these reflections disapproval of his conduct at the very moment when he thought he had rendered a signal service and laid a most solid foundation for an approaching general peace. Temper got the better of him; he gruffly proposed to the Landgrave of Hesse to disarm his troops; on which the Hanoverians protested, on the ground that the capitulation said nothing whatever about disarming, and the Landgrave refused to submit to such shame. He fooled the maréchal with a treaty of subsidies, which he asked for, in return for which he was willing to give us, he said, his troops. On the other side, Mme. de Pompadour, urged by M. de Soubise, accused Maréchal de Richelieu of intending to deliver M. de Soubise into the hands of the King of Prussia, by refusing to send him the troops that were promised to the army in Saxony. In point of fact, his Prussian Majesty came near surprising the Prince de Soubise in Gotha, and did drive him back among the mountains of Hesse.

All these things together, and the sending of M. de

Crémille to Halberstadt, filled Maréchal de Richelieu with an ill-will and bitterness which went on increasing. He sent M. de Soubise, very late, it is true, more troops than he asked for. He complained of the shackles which the Court put to the execution of the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven. To make an end of his complaints, I sent him the ratifications of the king, and full power to come to an agreement with the Duke of Cumberland in any manner he judged suitable and useful to the service of the king and his allies. M. de Voltaire has said, in his "Siècle de Louis XV." (vol. iii., p. 284), that this ratification and these powers arrived too late, while the ratification of England was never sent at all. He ought to have said that Maréchal de Richelieu, having moved so far from the allied armies, having sent away a strong reinforcement to M. de Soubise, and having divided his own army before the battle of Rosbach, without choosing to await the results of the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven, was no longer in a condition to make the Duke of Cumberland keep his word, or hold in awe the old Landgrave who was laughing at him and deceiving him.

With regard to the Duke of Brunswick: bound by the private treaty concluded at Vienna in the preceding August, he made a semblance of complaint against the violence exercised on his troops; he ordered them to retire with the army of the allies · he uttered loud cries at the retention of his son, the Hereditary prince. In a word, he played his comedy with a very natural air. He wrote letters breathing honour and good faith, which will be fouud printed at the end of the document above-mentioned, entitled "Parallel of the Conduct of the King, etc." All this comedy ended by the recall of the Duke of Cumberland, whom the king, his father, would no longer expose to the blame laid upon him of openly breaking his word. They put Prince Ferdinand

of Brunswick in his place, and matters changed aspect. It was only, as Louis XIV. said of M. de Vendôme, one man the more, but that man was worth an army.

The capitulation of Kloster-Zeven could have been executed if M. de Richelieu had obliged the Hanoverian army to divide before he marched to Halberstadt with the bulk of his forces; if, as a prudent man and a trained soldier, he had stipulated for the disarming of the Hessian troops; if he had fixed a date for the execution of each article; if he had taken hostages and sureties; and if he had not left the door open to the bad faith of the Hanoverians.

Had France ratified the capitulation immediately (as she promised to do the moment that England had determined to do so), it would not have advanced in any way its execution; for England would have delayed her ratification, and after amusing us long with discussions, her Court would have ended, as it did, by recalling the Duke of Cumberland, who alone had pledged his word. The King of England would always have preferred to compromise his son, rather than sacrifice his States, or injure his power in Germany. A boy twelve years old, well-organized, would have foreseen these things, and not have accumulated imprudent actions to the point to which they were multiplied in this unhappy affair. But the truth is that Maréchal de Richelieu, having advanced too far into Stade territory, feared to stay there any longer lest he should be sunk in mud as soon as the rains began. On approaching the camp at Stade, he saw it was not at all easy to attack; he feared a check (for one ought to do full justice to his valour), and he did not like to compromise the fame he had won at Minorca.

It is certain, however, that had he forced the camp at Stade, the Hanoverian army was lost without resources, having the Elbe, which at that point is a sea, behind it; it

would then have really capitulated and laid down its arms. The success of that attack was inevitable, if the maréchal had taken all necessary precautions to attain it; the superiority in number of his forces, the consternation of the enemy, and the better quality of our troops guaranteed this. But Maréchal de Richelieu had other projects in his head; he did not wish to leave to M. de Soubise the glory of conquering Saxony and driving out the King of Prussia. It was with this in view that he marched his army to Halberstadt the moment the convention of Kloster-Zeven was signed, without awaiting the orders of the king, and without knowing whether his Majesty would approve of the capitulation.

Arriving at Halberstadt, he found it easy and pleasant to levy contributions and devastate a rich country, which ought to have provisioned our winter quarters had he sent its surplus to our rear. Besides this, he saw clearly that Mme. de Pompadour wished that M. de Soubise should have the glory of taking possession of Saxony. She demanded eagerly that the promised troops should be sent to him. The intriguers of Paris and Versailles, and his former mistresses, heated his brain by their letters; M. Rouillé, sent him, through his wife, all the reflections made upon him in the king's Council. Thus spite and vexation united in the maréchal's soul with discontent at the little approbation which the Court had given to his convention at Kloster-Zeven; and he gave way to his temper like a young man.

He at last determined, as I have already said, to send M. de Soubise the troops he asked for and to divide his army; one half of which regained the Lower Rhine, the other half crossed the river; so that when Prince Ferdinand, successor to the Duke of Cumberland, left his quarters and threw off the mask after the battle of Rosbach, the maréchal

could take to meet him only forty battalions. On this occasion he committed a great blunder, for it is an axiom in war that a general shall never march upon the enemy unless he is strong enough to awe him or fight him. The result was that the maréchal was obliged to retreat from Lunenberg to Zell, and to bring out in bad weather troops who, after long marches, had only just gone into quarters. These marches and countermarches ruined in part the finest army the king ever had. The conduct of the maréchal in Halberstadt was very incomprehensible.

M. de Soubise, having received reinforcements, rashly advanced into Saxony, against the tenor of his instructions, which forbade him to expose himself to an action with the King of Prussia, and ordered him to mislead his Majesty and retreat before him, so as to favour the operations of the Austrians in Silesia; or, in case the King of Prussia, too hard pressed in Silesia should abandon Saxony, M. de Soubise was then to occupy it. These were his instructions, judiciously drawn up by Maréchal de Belleisle. Impatient to acquire glory, to be marshal of France, and, possibly, to command alone the grand army, M. de Soubise pushed the head of one column to the gates of Leipzig.

It was at this moment that Maréchal de Richelieu divided, as I have said, his army. The Hanoverian army was already demanding to extend its quarters, thus announcing from this time the rupture of the capitulation. This was another important reason for not dividing his army. M. de Richelieu had before him a sure blow to strike: supposing, as was likely, that M. de Soubise was defeated by the King of Prussia, the maréchal, by entering Saxony and taking up a good position, would put the King of Prussia under the necessity of either fighting him with inferior forces, or of remaining in Saxony lest the maréchal should

seize it. In both cases the Hanoverians would have been careful not to infringe the capitulation so long as the King of Prussia was involved in Saxony; in fact they did not determine, and could not without imprudence determine, to violate it until Maréchal de Richelieu divided his army. The defeat of M. de Soubise would have been nothing if the maréchal had threatened Saxony with all his forces; the beaten army would have retreated into Hesse and taken the Landgrave and his army into our immediate possession. Maréchal de Richelieu had seventy thousand men, and the King of Prussia could collect no more than twenty-eight to thirty thousand even by stripping his forts of their garrisons.

Thus the faults committed in the capitulation or convention of Kloster-Zeven, however great they were, were not comparable to that of dividing the army at so critical a moment. Had he avoided that fault Maréchal de Richelieu might have justified his imprudent march to Halberstadt and his useless stay there; he could have repaired the disaster of Rosbach by his mere presence, disconcerted the plans of the King of Prussia, favoured the operations of our allies, and prevented the treachery of the Hanoverians. The latter did not fail to cast the shame of that treachery upon us, by fine manifestos, in which they accused us of being the first to violate the capitulation. Success justifies everything in war; the defeated and the dupes are the only ones condemned.

Every one knows what happened after the battle of Rosbach and the rupture of the capitulation: Maréchal de Richelieu, as I have said, marched on Prince Ferdinand with a small force, and retrograded to Zell, where the army of the allies gave signs of attacking him. He deliberated at Zell whether or not to abandon the whole Electorate of Hanover; the order for the retreat was given, but the arrival of sixteen

battalions decided the maréchal to cross the river and offer battle to the Hanoverians. This audacious and well arranged movement forced Prince Ferdinand to retire to quarters, firmly resolved, however, to attack ours as soon as possible. The Comte de Maillebois gave good counsel on this occasion; he had played the part of a mute spectator at the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven, having certainly too much intelligence not to feel its evils. But it was his interest to let our generals ruin themselves, one after the other, by their blunders, in order to have no one before him who could dispute his right to command the army.

After the retreat of Prince Ferdinand, Maréchal de Richelieu made arrangements to put his army into winter-quarters; it sorely needed rest and reparation. He sent word to Versailles that the army of the king was placed in "impregnable citadels," — those were his words, — and that it was necessary for his health and the safety of the army that he should return to pass the winter at Court. This proposal was resisted for some time; but at last Mme. de Pompadour, who hated him, determined the king to recall him and to send in his place the Comte de Clermont [Louis de Bourbon-Condé] prince of the blood, with M. de Crémille to assist him with advice.

I had been of opinion that instead of recalling the maréchal, they should send him word that he might return to Versailles if he pleased; but that as the king was informed that his winter-quarters were likely to be attacked, his Majesty would be obliged to appoint another general in his place, not having confidence enough in M. de Villemeur to leave him the care of commanding so great an army until the spring. If they had taken this course the maréchal would not have returned; and as he has both audacity and good luck he might perhaps have disconcerted the operations of

the enemy, or else have retreated with less loss and more glory than befell us. But the actual result was that a few days after Maréchal de Richelieu's return, we learned that one of our quarters had been forced (February 18, 1758), and that we were abandoning all our conquests, our sick and wounded, our magazines, our heavy artillery, the garrison of Minden, and all the advantages of the preceding campaign.

Maréchal de Richelieu, after his return, complained of me secretly, but he saw me daily and never accused me in public of wishing to injure him. He might have blamed in preference his own faults and the enmity of Mme. de Pompadour and the Maréchal de Belleisle; but as for me, I had treated him as a friend, although in my capacity as minister of Foreign Affairs, I might have demanded his punishment. I even thought that it was for the king's dignity not to cast upon the imprudence of his general the rupture of the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven.

In the "Parallel of the Conduct of the King with that of the King of England, Elector of Hanover," all the odium of this rupture was thrown upon the Court of London; the faults of the maréchal were excused on the ground that he believed the Duke of Cumberland incapable of breaking his word of honour, and the King of England of dishonouring his son by making light of the pledge he had given. I charged Bussy, head-clerk of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, and former secretary of embassy to Maréchal de Richelieu, to draw up that document (which was rather bad as to form) and communicate it to the maréchal, who gave it his approbation, and since then he has used it as a shield to disculpate his imprudence and gullibility; but as the capitulation has been printed at the end of the manifesto, it is easy for keen eyes to see through the veil that covers the maréchal's

blunders, to divine them, and perceive that the king would not blame his general, thinking it best not to punish him.

The maréchal kept up an intercourse of cordiality and friendship with me as long as I was in office; but he broke out against me when I was exiled; it would have been more noble to attack me when I could defend myself. I had caused him to be appointed to the command at Minorca; I had lately vindicated his military and political conduct in the face of Europe; he might have dispensed with declaring himself against me at the moment of my fall; at least, that is how I should have acted had I been in his place.

With regard to President Ogier, he excused himself for his share in the capitulation by sending to the king the letters of Maréchal de Richelieu, which gave him to understand that he was authorized to negotiate with the Duke of Cumberland.

This evacuation of Hanover cost France forty millions — besides the shame of it.

XI.

1757–1758. — The Affair of Rosbach, November 5, 1757. — Negotiations for Peace at the end of the Campaign of 1757. — Ecclesiastical Affairs during the years 1757 and 1758.

I HAVE said already that the instructions of M. de Soubise were that he should amuse and delay the King of Prussia in Saxony while the Austrians were laying siege to Schweidnitz and doing all they could to establish themselves in Silesia; and also that this general was forbidden to expose himself to a decisive action. This plan was followed so long as M. de Soubise had few troops, but no sooner had he received the reinforcements sent him unwillingly by M. de Richelieu than his hands itched, and he despatched the Comte de Saint-Germain, a man of intelligence and a warrior, knowing how to command but obeying with difficulty, at the head of a column of troops to the environs of Leipzig. This general did not approve of the movement; but he knew how to acquit himself on it like an able man. Meanwhile the King of Prussia was assembling his forces.

When the position of M. de Soubise became known at Versailles the king's Council examined and discussed the question as to whether it was expedient to change his instructions. Opinions were unanimous that he should be ordered to keep to the first plan and risk nothing; it was known that the King of Prussia was very eager to get back to Silesia; it was therefore no time to risk the chances of a battle. Mme. de Pompadour was shocked that the king's ministers should oppose the glory of M. de Soubise; each of them denied that he had voted to order him to retrace his steps; I, alone, had

the courage to keep to my opinion and dare to admit it. Nevertheless, M. de Paulmy [minister of war] wrote an ambiguous letter to M. de Soubise, to let him know the opinion of the king's Council without actually forbidding him to fight if he thought he could do so with advantage.

Thus begins, after the convention of Kloster-Zeven, the fatal period of the misfortunes of the war. It was also the first of the bitterness which now began to slip into my relations with Mme. de Pompadour; she wanted me to have the same prepossessions and the same zeal for M. de Soubise that she had herself, and that was not possible.

It must be said in praise of that general, that as soon as he knew the king's intentions he retired, not without risk, and went into camp near Rosbach, where, he sent word, he should await the King of Prussia. That prince did, in fact, reconnoitre him two days before the battle, and in spite of the excellence of his position, would have attacked him on his right, which was occupied by the army of the Empire — of whom the King of Prussia thought very little and among whom he had many partisans. But Marshal Keith and Prince Henry, his brother, both great generals, were not in favour of it. It is even related that Keith ventured to say to the king, "Sire, remember Kolin." The day was spent in cannonading. The King of Prussia returned to his camp, intending soon to break it up and march into Silesia. The second day after this abortive attempt, so glorious for M. de Soubise, the latter held a council of war, at which it was resolved to let the King of Prussia depart and then occupy his winter quarters.

I did not know until a year later what determined M. de Soubise to attack the King of Prussia the very morning after the above decision was made. The Duc de Choiseul, returning from his embassy to Vienna to take my place in

the ministry of Foreign Affairs, told me that it was he who had caused that action. A courier whom he had sent to the Prince de Soubise arrived just after the council of war had broken up, and changed the decision; the Court of Vienna cast fire and flames at M. de Soubise for not daring to attack the King of Prussia with superior forces; it dreaded lest his Majesty should return to Silesia and interrupt the successes of Charles of Lorraine; and Mme. de Pompadour had written to the Duc de Choiseul that the king's Council were only trying to degrade the Prince de Soubise. M. de Choiseul thereupon took upon himself to exhort that general to greater boldness and confidence. The order to march on the King of Prussia was given at midday. We received two couriers despatched on that day; one bringing us word of the resolution to give battle, the other announcing the total defeat of our army; the first despatch had made me expect the second. It will be seen by this incident that M. de Soubise was in some sort excusable; having deferred to the advice of a minister whom he knew to be well-informed; but we see also by what underhand manœuvres all these great affairs were managed.

I shall say nothing of this shameful event, in which M. de Soubise gave proofs of valour, the troops of cowardice, the Comte de Saint-Germain (who commanded the retreat) of ability, and the King of Prussia of the superiority of his *coup d'œil* and of his talents. He said to the French officers who had the honour of supping with him after the battle (November 5, 1757) that he had not expected to be attacked by the French, and had taken our first troops for marauders from the imperial army; that he had done a pretty good day's-work that day, but there was more important work awaiting him elsewhere. In fact, he

started the next day for Silesia; on his way he heard of the taking of Schweidnitz, and continued his march; a few days later he received news of the battle of Breslau, the dispersion of his army, and the capture of the Prince of Bevern who commanded it, but he still marched on. It was, perhaps, on this occasion that he most showed his presence of mind and courage.

We know what happened at Lissa [a market town in Silesia, where the battle was fought December 5, 1757] one month after the battle of Rosbach. It is not for me to tell the blunders made by the Austrian generals on that day, because they knew so well how to repair them in the ensuing campaign at the siege of Olmütz, and because the empress-queen and her minister, Comte Kaunitz, created, in the space of four months a new army, which obliged the King of Prussia to raise the siege of that place and renounce his great project of marching on Vienna and overthrowing the Austrian dominion.

After Rosbach, I was of opinion, together with the whole Council, that the Prince de Soubise should be ordered to join his forces to those of Maréchal de Richelieu, who, having divided his army (as already said), would thus have been sufficiently reinforced to keep in awe Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had broken the convention of Kloster-Zeven. But Mme. de Pompadour was angry that her general should be put under the orders of Maréchal de Richelieu; on which, each minister withdrew his opinion; I kept mine and dared to support it. Mme. de Pompadour showed me her indignation; I answered that I was a true servant of M. de Soubise, but that his interests were less dear to me than those of the State. Here, then, is the period when Mme. de Pompadour's friendship for me began to cool; it revived a little during the next campaign, when I favoured

giving M. de Soubise twenty-four thousand men to command, and sending them to join the Austrians. It will be seen later that this army was subsequently sent to Hesse, where it obliged Prince Ferdinand, after the battle of Creveld, to re-cross the Rhine and cover his own country. Thus the campaign of 1757 ended with the battles of Rosbach and Lissa, which caused incalculable damage to the Austrians and to ourselves.

Between the dates of these two battles I reflected on the means of terminating the war; and I began from afar to prepare our allies for it. At the same time I planned to turn the scales by the declaration of Denmark. This negotiation was so secret that it has never yet fully transpired. Baron de Bernstoff, minister of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen, a shrewd and able man, did not desire (as I think I have already said) either our triumph or the aggrandizement of the King of Prussia, or that of our allies. He was cautious with England, aspiring to the rôle of mediator at the general peace; but seeing that the King of Prussia was getting too great an ascendency, he lent an ear to the insinuations I caused to be put into it, recalling to him a sentence in one of his despatches which had struck me. The king's Council approved of my negotiation, without, however, believing that it could succeed. It was much astonished when I placed before its eyes in a very short time the convention already signed [May 4, 1758].

It was not without some trouble that I calmed the uneasiness of our allies at this negotiation. President Ogier well repaired on this occasion the mistake he made at the time of the convention of Kloster-Zeven. It became a question of advancing a moderate sum to Denmark to put her into a condition to enter upon the scene with forty thousand men, and to assure her of our good offices at the peace to obtain

for her a certain circuit around her, which she needed. The controller-general granted me everything; but he broke his word; a new convention had to be made; the finance department, after promising to be punctual, was not so. Finally, during the summer of the campaign of 1758, the affair came on again. Denmark asked me for my personal promise, and the finance department, after assuring me that I might give it, made me break it for the third time. . . .

It was then, and from other considerations not less important, that I resolved to resign the ministry of Foreign Affairs. This will be seen in the third and final part of these memoirs.

A few days after the battle of Rosbach, I profited by the lessening of confidence that Mme. de Pompadour was beginning to have in the success of the war to make her feel it was impossible to hope for a more fortunate issue to the coming campaign than to the last. I represented to her that we had as yet lost nothing in our maritime war; that Minorca would serve for the restitution of Louisburg, if that were taken; but that in the long run it was impossible that the English, superior in naval force, should not wrench from us our colonies, the source and foundation of our foreign commerce; that it was not in the power of our present allies to indemnify us for that loss; that the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven and its consequences had changed the scene; that Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick was rendering the armies of the allied enemy more formidable than they had hitherto been; that Mr. Pitt, successor to Mr. Fox, had felt, on becoming minister, the importance for England that the balance of power in Europe should not lean to our side, because the continental interest is stronger than the maritime interest; that we had no generals; that the finances could no longer bear the burden of expenses; that in this state it

was madness to continue a ruinous war; that we ought to concern ourselves seriously for peace, in concert with our allies; that Sweden and Russia would readily entertain the idea, also Saxony and the Empire, and that we must expect some difficulty with the Court of Vienna, bent on continuing the war, before we could bring it to adopt our views. I also pointed out to her that, in relation to our maritime war, I had already prepared the Court of Madrid to be our mediator, and to make her mediation respected by the increase of her land and sea forces; that the Queen of Spain, so opposed to entering our quarrels, was beginning to feel how important it was for that monarchy that our colonies should not fall into the hands of England, and how honourable to Spain was the part we desired her to play. I told her that I had already drawn up the draft of three different treaties to be made with the Court of London: the first, in case we had successes over that power; the second, in case those successes were divided between the two nations; the third, in case that superiority should declare itself on the side of England; that the first two plans were so reasonable that Spain would have no great difficulty in obtaining their adoption if we had the superiority, or if the balance were even; but that in the third case, that of our ill-luck, Spain, interested in the preservation of our colonies which cover and defend hers, would readily soften any harsh conditions imposed by our conquerors, and obtain for us, under threat of a declaration of war, the acceptance of such reasonable sacrifices as we might be willing to make.

I added to these considerations another, still more important, namely: that the Court of Vienna could not indemnify us for the loss of our colonies, and our commerce, the abounding source of wealth to France; that if, for its private interests, it persisted in wishing to ruin us, we ought

not to rely on either its friendship or the fidelity of its alliance, because, if its sentiments towards us were sincere it was almost as much interested as we were ourselves in the preservation of the power of France, inasmuch as France was its great resource, at least during the lifetime of the King of Prussia; consequently the obstinacy which the Court of Vienna might show in continuing the war deserved only political circumspection on our part, for the king owed all preference to his own kingdom over his allies.

These considerations did not convince Mme. de Pompadour, who looked at all State questions like a child; but she had no good arguments to oppose to them. In consequence, I received orders from the king to prepare the minds of Sweden and Russia for peace; and I awaited a favourable moment to make the first overtures to the Court of Vienna.

The loss of the battle of Lissa, the peace of Breslau, and the annihilation of the empress's army furnished me with the proper occasion. That Court was then in the greatest embarrassment, but it was not in a state of consternation like ours. The empress declared to the king that she would make peace if France desired it, but that, as for herself, so far as she was mistress, she was resolved to defend herself in her last village with her last battalion, sooner than fall into dependence on the King of Prussia; nevertheless, she consented that steps should be taken towards peace, provided that while working for it the war was continued with greater wisdom and vigour.

This consent was at first only verbal; but I profited by the fear that the siege of Olmütz inspired in the Court of Vienna to obtain her consent to the peace in writing. It must be agreed that the Duc de Choiseul conducted this negotiation well. He then thought as I did about the inutility and danger of continuing the war. He urged the Court of

Vienna with an activity which is in his nature; it must be allowed that he was aided by circumstances, and that the Comte de Montazet, who had won the confidence of the empress by the services he had rendered her in her armies, and by his intimacy with Princess Esterhazy, her favourite, was a great source of strength to him.

Count Kaunitz, the author of the alliance between France and Austria, had much difficulty in resigning the hope of conquering Silesia. The empress-queen — and we must say this to her glory — put into this whole war nothing but dignity, reason, and courage. But the self-love of the minister was concerned in not abandoning his work. The empress, feeling how much the jealousy inspired by this minister's favour was prejudicial to her affairs, took the useful step of giving him all necessary powers to order throughout her States everything that related to the war; she was not afraid that he would abuse this authority, because she was very certain to dismiss him when she saw fit. The war would have been better conducted if Louis XV. had done the same thing in France, when Maréchal de Belleisle who, with great defects, had military talents and experience, took the department of war. But Mme. de Pompadour, was, in point of fact, the king's prime-minister, without the title, and she did not think that his Majesty ought to follow the example of the empress.

The Austrian army, withdrawn to Bohemia after the battle of Lissa, was diminished by one half; one may almost say it no longer existed; in less than three months its ranks were filled up, and itself so formidable that it was able to raise the siege of Olmütz, which the King of Prussia had the boldness to undertake at a great distance from his sources of supply. This creation of an army did great honour to Count Kaunitz, and at the same time it made

manifest the resources of the Austrian power. If Maréchal Daun, by seizing two convoys of the King of Prussia, and stealing a march upon him, compelled him to raise the siege and thus saved Vienna, it must be owned that his Prussian Majesty made the most glorious and best-ordered retreat before the Austrian-general; Maréchal Keith was in charge of it.[1]

I believed I had rendered an important service to the State in obtaining permission from the king to negotiate for peace, and by succeeding in bringing our allies to consider it; but this peace, in order to be honourable, required that the campaign of 1758 should be better conducted than that of the preceding year. It was then that I began to treat with Denmark, and made that Court agree to declare itself with an army of forty thousand men, which, taking that of the allies by the centre, ought to have settled our superiority. I expected that the Court of Vienna, if it had successes, would be unwilling for peace, although it had consented to it. But the king's Council agreed with me on the necessity of not showing any false compliance in this important affair, and I took upon myself to bring that Court to our views without a rupture, and without risking the ruin of the nation for the sole interest, ill-understood, of our ally.

I profited by the losses occasioned to us by the retreat from Hanover to make the Court of Vienna relinquish the considerable arrearages on the subsidies which we owed to it, and which were due for the last six months; so that when M. Boullongne showed me by order of the king the

[1] James Keith, successively in the service of George I., the Pretender, Russia, and Frederick the Great, was killed at the battle of Hochkirch, October 14, 1758. See the Prince de Ligne's account of his death, in these Historical Memoirs. — Tr.

state of our finances in April, 1758, I undertook to diminish by one-half the subsidy granted to the Court of Vienna, and to reduce it still further in the course of the campaign. I sent the necessary instructions for this purpose to our ambassador in Vienna, M. de Choiseul, who succeeded in both negotiations by help of the memorials, instructions, and draft of treaty which I addressed to him.

I even wished, when he succeeded me in the ministry of Foreign Affairs that he should have the glory of this success and thus strengthen his credit with the public. Who would believe that two weeks after his return from Vienna, and after my dismissal, his friends would have the impudence to spread it about that I had granted the subsidies, and that M. de Choiseul had suppressed them on his return? There would have been no time to send a courier to Vienna and receive an answer, even supposing that that Court could make up its mind on a subject so interesting at the moment of opening the despatch. But this absurdity was believed by the public, and many writings and some foreign gazettes had the stupidity to announce it; thus turning against me my own work and profiting by the praise I had taken pains to give the negotiator in order that he might have the honour and glory of the affair; whereas in truth he was only the instrument which I, the minister, had used; he might share the glory, but not have the whole of it. The author of the "Codicille politique du Maréchal de Belleisle," a man ill-informed and of little authority, had the baseness to cast the blame of the subsidies on me, and to attribute the merit of their reduction to my successor; but this opinion did not last, because my enemies were in too great haste to spread it; people calculated the periods, and they soon saw the truth; this impudence succeeded for the moment only. I am convinced that the Duc de Choiseul

The Duc de Choiseul.

had no part in this injustice; though it would have been graceful in him to destroy it.

I felt relieved the moment I obtained the formal consent of the Court of Vienna to treat for peace at the close of the campaign of 1758. I had just terminated the affairs of parliament, and established principles in those of the clergy, as I shall presently relate. I remember that when M. de Puysieux re-entered the king's Council in the summer of 1758, he was much astonished — he, who had never approved of the war — when I said to him, "Was it too late to have thought of making peace at the end of the first campaign? On the contrary, was it not rather adroit and rather fortunate to have brought the Court of Vienna to formally consent to it?"

From that time M. de Puysieux always showed a marked esteem for me, which has gone on increasing. If he cannot be ranked among the great ministers, neither can we refuse without injustice to place him among the virtuous ones, and I have known him in the Council of the king to give sound advice and maintain it with courage and dignity.

As soon as I had re-established and pacified the parliament of Paris at the end of the summer of 1757 (as I have related elsewhere) I occupied myself in the work of restoring calmness within the Church. The king had exiled the Archbishop of Paris (Beaumont) to Conflans in order to withdraw him from the attacks of parliament, which had convoked the princes, peers, and the assembly of the Chambers for the purpose of summoning before them and judging this prelate. The affair was not ended, but it seemed to me unjust that, parliament having been re-established, the archbishop should not be recalled to his bishopric. I induced parliament to suspend its proceedings until some plan of conduct could be agreed upon with him which should

quench the fires lighted in the first place by the affairs of the Hospital, next by the "billets de confession" and the refusal of the sacraments, and, in the last instance, by the affair of the Sisterhood in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. These nuns, by the terms of their constitution, were to elect after a certain time their Superior; and this election is bound to be preceded by a general communion in their church. This communion the archbishop forbade, without declaring his motives, but under pretext of Jansenism, or (which comes to the same thing in these days) under pretext that these nuns were rebellious to the bull Unigenitus. It is certain that several among them did not think rightly in that respect, but they had never done any overt act which proved their disobedience; their whole fault reduced itself to reading the books of Port-Royal, to a few remarks made among themselves, which were immediately reported to the archbishop, and to a few visits received from priests suspected of Jansenism and from magistrates accused of rejecting the bull Unigenitus. The chaplain whom the archbishop had given to the Sisterhood rendered an exact and minute account, daily, of all these things, and M. de Beaumont, on this bulletin, without judicial inquiry and without confrontation, persuaded himself that the said things established notorious facts, and even evidence so clear that he could not, in conscience, admit the Sisters to the Holy Table.

This was the state of things. Parliament having begun proceedings against the archbishop, which were suspended by his exile, could not, it declared, dispense with continuing them as soon as M. de Beaumont regained his liberty and returned to Paris. I asked for time to negotiate with the prelate, and obtained it from parliament. I conferred with the chief-president, the king's lawyers, President d'Ormesson,

and the Bishop of Orléans, who had lately been put in charge of the ministry of benefices; and we agreed upon a letter which the nuns of Saint-Marcel were to write to M. Saint-Florentin, asking that minister to assure the king of the regret they felt at having incurred the displeasure of the archbishop, whom they respected as their superior, and whose virtues they admired. They protested their submission to all the decrees of the Church, and to all the bulls of the pope, and to the manner in which they were received and authorized in the kingdom; being debarred, they said, from making a more detailed and express statement by the declaration of the king, registered by parliament, imposing absolute silence on all the matters which were agitating the Church in France; promising, however, to bear the same homage of submission to the feet of their pastor every time that he exacted it. This letter was communicated to the pope's nuncio, Guatterio; he conveyed its contents to His Holiness (Benedict XIV.), who judged that the declaration of the nuns was sufficient, and that the persons concerned ought to be content with it.

As soon as the king had put me in charge of the affairs of the Church, I proposed to him to govern them on the following principles: 1. Before doing anything in matters so delicate to ask the advice of his Council of State and the Council of Despatches united in committee at the chancellor's, where matters could be discussed fundamentally. 2. To compose another committee of the best-informed and most experienced cardinals and bishops, before which the opinions of the united Councils should be laid, in order to see that no theological or canonical principle was violated; and, when these political and ecclesiastical councils agreed, to make a memorial thereon to be communicated to the Court of Rome, which, having given its approbation, would

put the king in all safety to act as sovereign in the affairs of the Church.

I maintained this system throughout my ministry; it had all the appearance of disposing parliament to adopt the advice of the king's Council, by which means the clergy and parliament had nothing to object to; the Court of Rome was satisfied with the deference shown to it; things were done *en règle;* and the over-heated bishops were necessarily obliged to tranquillize themselves to a plan of conduct studied by their principal colleagues, approved by the pope, adopted by the Council, and respected by the parliaments. By following this system I could have answered to the king for the extinguishment, within a few years, of the fermentation in the Church, the parliament, and the State; what I did in two years shows plainly what I could have done had I been longer in office.

It must be said that Pope Benedict XIV., with much enlightenment, integrity, and love of peace, aided immensely in the establishment of a system so wise, and so religious; but I should have had the same advantage with his successor, whose character I knew; and who, in after years, would have been content had he been treated with the same consideration in the affair of the Jesuits (of which I will speak separately), but in which, he was treated with too much carelessness, and sometimes with violence.

Princes ought not to teach the people to despise the authority of the Head of the Church; it is not to be expected that the Court of Rome will ever renounce the principles under which she formerly pushed her claims too far; at the same time, there is no fear that henceforth she will try to realize the chimera of universal power which was favoured in the olden time by the coarseness and ignorance of those ages, and which no one in the present day would defend,

minds being now more enlightened. Thus, all we have to do is not to attack without reason the pretensions of the Court of Rome, for she will always feel herself under an obligation to defend them; but if we seem to ignore them, and show that Court the respect and deference which are her due, we may be certain she will undertake nothing against us, or if she does, it will always be easy for a judicious ministry to stop it without quarrel or public outcry. The authority of the Church is externally founded on the opinion of minds; now, the minds of the present day are only too much inclined to discussion; they have been allowed to lean towards scepticism; which was ill-advised, for human laws derive their principal strength from the religious respect which is rendered to divine law. France has nothing to fear from the bishops, nor from the Head of the Church; that which it has to dread in these days is to see their legitimate authority despised; and it is for the king to maintain that authority, and cause it to be respected for his own sake.

As soon as I was assured that the king's Council, the leading members of the clergy, the pope, and the parliaments adopted the plan of conduct which I proposed for the affairs of the Church, I willingly took charge of the commission which the king gave me to negotiate with the Archbishop of Paris, whose zeal, virtues, and inflexibility I knew, although I did not know him personally. I spoke to him frankly and with firmness. I made him feel the advantages which would accrue to the Church from our union; I assured him that in all things we thought the same fundamentally, and only differed as to the manner of conducting them; I insisted on the necessity of extinguishing, for the preservation of the sacred person of the king, that spirit of fanaticism of which he had just been the victim; I explained to him the necessity

the king was under to treat the parliaments with great circumspection especially during a war, which could not be supported except by certified and registered edicts. He demanded, in order to re-establish peace, certain rather difficult things, all of which I consented to, only exacting in return sufficient time to arrange them. We were agreed on all points in this first conference. A second was appointed at which to finish everything; but in the interval interested persons put suspicions and fears into the mind of the virtuous prelate, whose lights are not as great as his virtues.

I had announced peace to the king as certain after this second conference, but that hope vanished. I found the archbishop completely changed. He asked preliminaries which could not be fulfilled, would not yield an iota, nor grant me any suitable and proper time. His inflexibility showed itself in the strongest light; and as he talked to me incessantly of his conscience, which forbade him to lend himself to any modification, it escaped me to tell him that his conscience was a dark lantern which lighted only himself; that speech got spread about. In truth conscience can be blind or enlightened; a blind conscience makes fanatics; an enlightened conscience wise men, submissive to rules without enthusiasm and without excess.

All was over between us from the second interview. There was a third conference between the archbishop and Maréchal de Belleisle, which had no greater success. Then, as it was absolutely necessary to send him away to withdraw him from the prosecution of parliament, I advised the king to put him to grapple with a committee composed of cardinals and bishops, in order that the archbishop should be judged by his peers; a proceeding which had no more success than my own. After which, it was no longer possible for me to stop the action of parliament, and the king exiled the archbishop to his native

region, though I represented to him that this means was only good to gain time, and did not end the affair, inasmuch as the archbishop could not always be kept in exile; and besides, such harshness exercised towards him gave a lustre of persecution to his principles of conduct, and would certainly not change his opinions. But at Court, when they gain a little time they think they have gained everything.

It was now a question of ending the affair of the nuns in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel by the authority of the Primate of Lyon; the king's lawyers proposed this plan and they quoted precedents. The Council adopted the expedient. The pope, consulted by Cardinal de Tencin, and previously by the king approved very highly of this hierarchical method, and quoted from the ancient Church records, which he knew well, various examples of important matters settled by the primates.

I had sent the Sieur Afforty, former secretary of Chancellor d'Aguesseau, to Cardinal de Tencin, who, after receiving the pope's opinion, had taken upon himself the burden of judging this affair. M. Afforty, who was taking to him the documents and memorials relating to it, arrived at Lyon on the very day the cardinal had received the viaticum. He died a few days later, and we then had recourse to the Bishop of Autun (Montazet), a born administrator of the see of Lyon, whether for spiritual or for temporal affairs. He took the duty at first with some reluctance. Then he asked permission to go and treat of it with the Archbishop of Paris; this was refused, because M. de Beaumont was likely to turn him from the intention of judging him if he allowed him to see his repugnance to doing so. It certainly could not be allowed that etiquette between bishops should prevent the termination, by canonical means approved by the pope, of a quarrel which heated both parliament and the public. The Bishop of Autun asked that he might at least be allowed to write to

the archbishop; this was also refused for the same reasons. He then judged the case in the manner we know; and that judgment led the king and his Council to appoint him, a few months later, to the archbishopric of Lyon, because, the affair having ended only provisionally and being certain of renewal at the approaching election of a Mother-Superior, it was natural that the same judge and the same tribunal should take charge of it. This topic can be read in the fine memoir of the Archbishop of Lyon, to which it is difficult to reply weightily.

Nevertheless, that judgment caused him to lose the confidence of the clergy and that of the royal family. In his place, I should have let myself be appointed to the see of Lyon, and then have declined it in order not to give occasion to my enemies to say that I sacrificed my conscience to my ambition. That noble and disinterested action would have increased his reputation, and not have injured his prospects. I was his friend, and I would have given him this advice if I had not been the minister of the king; but I could not go against the system which his Majesty had adopted.

This affair roused great heat among the clergy, but it tranquillized the parliaments. M. Boullongne, controller-general, being at the end of his resources, believed he could not more promptly raise money than by summoning a special convocation of the clergy, from whom the king was to ask for sixteen millions as a gratuitous gift. They feared in the Council that such an assembly would be stormy and occasion excitement in minds, and especially in the parliaments; I promised the king that the meeting should pass off tranquilly, in spite of appearances.

Cardinal de Tavannes presided; the Archbishop of Rheims, then Archbishop of Narbonne, was the vice-president. All went off with the greatest decency; never were stormy skies succeeded by so great a calm. Those bishops who were

most prejudiced against our pacific maxims laid down their prejudices; I won the confidence of the prelates just as I had formerly won that of the Foreign ministers and the parliaments. There is a sure means to bring this about, namely: to be just, to be true, to be open, and faithful to one's word. No Court in Europe has ever distrusted my sincerity. Craftiness deceives for the moment only. Integrity, once recognized, never loses its power; it acts at all times, and under all circumstances. The confidence of the general assembly of the clergy in me went so far that it deliberated, without my consent, over asking the king to give me the first great see that should become vacant. Cardinal de Tavannes came to see me about this on behalf of the assembly, but I begged him not to allow that step to be taken.

The night before my exile, in the month of December, 1758, I worked for part of that night to bring about the return of the Archbishop of Paris, and to suspend a denunciation which was about to be made against a distinguished member of the clergy at a session of parliament. The zealous bishops thought, in the beginning, that my principles in ecclesiastical affairs were too mild; they have since felt how wise they were, and how much of their jurisdiction they themselves have lost by not having known how to accommodate themselves to circumstances. To-day, when the episcopate is suffering, it would fain have me placed at its head. But, having no hope now of being able to be useful to Church and State, I keep to the administration of my diocese, which occupies me solely. Providence, which raised me to the highest places, has doubtless not been willing that I should occupy them longer; I shall never desire them, and shall hold myself always far away from them. For a man who seeks good, and thinks loftily, there are but two things in this world: reputation, and repose.

PART THIRD.

XII.

1758. — The Events that preceded and followed the Battle of Creveld. — Retirement of M. de Paulmy. — Maréchal de Belleisle, Minister of War. — An important Service rendered to Mme. de Pompadour. — The Retirement of several Ministers. — Plan of Government proposed and accepted in the summer of 1758.

THE Marquis de Paulmy, feeling that the burden of the war was too heavy on his shoulders, asked to be allowed to quit that department. Mme. de Pompadour wished it to be given M. de Contades, and the Pâris, being unable to get it for M. de Crémille, a friend of M. Duverney, desired it for Maréchal de Belleisle, though he had formerly been their enemy. I was commissioned by the king to make the maréchal accept it; for he was still in the old error that a duke and peer and marshal of France could not without derogation be a secretary of State, — as if it were beneath any dignity, no matter what, to govern a great kingdom.

He took the office on March 3, 1758. His first act was to put his friend, M. de Mortagne, practically at the head of our army on the Lower Rhine. After that the Comte de Clermont was in reality nothing more than the senior in command. This Mortagne was a good cavalry officer, to whom Maréchal de Belleisle, with an infatuation to which he was subject, attributed a military genius equal to that of the King of Prussia. Nevertheless, this officer advised and did none but foolish things all the time that he was acting as the right arm of the Comte de Clermont, who said, mod-

estly, after the battle of Creveld, "I could have done as well as that alone." The conduct of M. de Mortagne was all the more inconceivable because Maréchal de Belleisle had sent him word that he should be marshal of France and commander-in-chief of the king's army after the first victorious action in which he should be engaged. It is not to be supposed, therefore, that he advised the Comte de Clermont badly in order to have him removed from the command, inasmuch as that command was promised him after the first victory. It is more natural to suppose that M. de Mortagne did not know any better, or that, having known better formerly, his knowledge had evaporated.

I never ceased from the opening of the spring campaign to warn the Comte de Clermont of the preparations the enemy were making to cross the Rhine; I pointed out to him the very spot where the pontoon bridges were to be thrown across. All this information was useless; not a word of it would our army believe, until at last the crossing was made without their deigning to be aware of it! This enterprise on the part of Prince Ferdinand was very daring, and would have been madness if we had had any generals. Our army might have fought to advantage; it preferred to retreat. Each day a courier brought us news, first, that the army was retrograding to select a certain battle-field, which was described; on the morrow another courier informed us that the position so vaunted in the last despatch was worth nothing. The king, impatient at the timidity of his generals, wrote with his own hand to the Comte de Clermont that he would rather see his army beaten than dishonoured by such retreats. During this time it was said in the army that the Court was ordering it to flee before an enemy much superior to it in numbers; the army magnified the forces of Prince Ferdinand and underestimated its own.

We learned from the Comte de Gisors, son of Maréchal de Belleisle, a young man of great promise, what was the order of battle, and how, in case of a reverse, our army was to retreat upon Liège, abandoning Wesel, the Rhine, all our allies of the Empire, and thus deliver Germany to the King of Prussia. The Comte de Clermont was at once forbidden to leave the Rhine; he had planned, or rather he was made to plan, after the battle of Creveld and the taking of Düsseldorf, to withdraw his army through the Electorate of Trèves to the Moselle, by passing through the defiles of Andernach, where Prince Ferdinand could have crushed him without escape. This retreat would not only have delivered the Rhine to our enemies but also the Meuse and the Low Countries, and have enabled Holland to declare herself. Short of suspecting a manifest treason, how can such conduct be explained? The king, however, felt pain in taking from the Comte de Clermont the command of his army, and so, to induce him to quit it, I was obliged to propose to the king to give him a council, and this means succeeded.

Meantime, before the appointment of this council, came the battle of Creveld, when the enemy surprised our left while the generals were at dinner. The Comte de Saint-Germain (to-day field-marshal in Denmark) sustained all day the attack of the enemy; and if he had been aided by no more than a few battalions of infantry the day was ours, for the enemy had folded their tents and prepared to fall back. The Comte de Gisors was mortally wounded in a charge M. de Mortagne ordered to be made, without reason or success, by the carbineers. The army then retreated without being beaten, and instead of occupying the heights above the Erft, it camped that night at Neuss and came the next day to Cologne. It was there that the Comte

de Clermont was advised to endeavour to get back to France through the Electorate of Trèves, and there that the prince, on learning that MM. de Contades and de Chévert were given him as council, resigned the command. I had great difficulty in obtaining from Maréchal de Belleisle the sacrifice of M. de Mortagne.

M. de Contades [lieutenant-general] took command of the army and led it just in time to the heights of the Erft which the enemy were marching to occupy. He lost on this occasion a chance to destroy the advanced guard of Prince Ferdinand. If the latter had not amused himself too long at Neuss he could have taken those heights before us, and then it would have been all over with our army. He had taken Düsseldorf, where our storehouses were, with a garrison of six thousand Palatiners, by simply throwing three shells from one side of the Rhine to the other (he could not throw a fourth because he had only three). The Elector Palatine implored the Comte de Clermont to succour the town, and not allow the fine Düsseldorf gallery of paintings to be burned, or else permit him to make arrangements with the enemy. Our general replied that he could not succour Düsseldorf, and that it was for the Elector to decide whether, bound as he was to the king, he could dispose of the place. The Elector decided to capitulate, and the French commander to submit to a capitulation he could not prevent.

Never did France run greater danger than at this conjuncture. We had no other army than that under the orders of the Comte de Clermont. If that army had been obliged to retire on the Moselle, Prince Ferdinand would have seized not only all the Rhine States, but he would have crossed the Meuse, invaded the Low Countries, now stripped of troops, and might have taken Lille, where we

had only three hundred militia, all its heavy artillery having been transported to Wesel. It would have taken us more than six weeks to move our army to Flanders and defend our frontier; Holland, where the governor, Princess Anne of England, had great influence, would have declared itself by an uprising of the people; almost the whole of Germany would have passed under the dominion of the King of Prussia and his allies, while France had scarcely army enough to defend her provinces, after having been mistress during the preceding campaign of all the territory between the Meuse and the Elbe.

It was under these circumstances that I wrote a letter to the king to make him feel how necessary and urgent it was either to decide himself or give to a capable minister sufficient authority to work the machine both within and without the kingdom. I proposed to him Maréchal de Belleisle, on account of his experience, or any other that his Majesty preferred to select, and I excluded myself; adding that at the peace the king could re-establish his ordinary form of government. I wrote at the same time to Mme. de Pompadour a stronger and more detailed letter, begging her to give to the king the letter which I have just mentioned, and which I left open that she might know its contents. I sent the packet to the marquise, and followed it some hours later to know if she had given my letter to the king and what he thought of it. I found her cold and sour; she said she had not given my letter to the king because she was sure it would displease him. I contested her arguments for some time; and then, seeing that she persisted in thinking that the letter, instead of producing a good effect, would produce a bad one, I begged her to give it back to me; which she did, and I tore it up before her and burned it. I should have feared to offend

her by showing an unjust and misplaced distrust had I asked her at the same time for the letter I had written to herself. Besides, having destroyed the one that was destined for the king, the other had no significance, for it was only a preface to the first. I was far indeed from thinking that Mme. de Pompadour would make use of the letter I had left with her to persuade the public that I had presented a memorial to the king in which I asked to be made prime-minister.

After my dismissal, she spread that report, which was ridiculous, although it was believed in France and in foreign countries. She detached certain phrases from the letter she kept, and gave them out as fragments of my pretended memorial to the king. On my return to Versailles after my exile, she was very careful not to touch that chord, because I should have confounded her. There is no example of a greater treachery, but what is even more rare is to have forgiven it, as I have done.

After the battle of Creveld, I persuaded the king to write to Maréchal d'Estrées and summon him to Versailles, place him in the Council, and bind him by that mark of confidence to forget the past and resume command of the army, at least until he had forced Prince Ferdinand to recross the Rhine; which would not have been difficult to execute.

This general arrived on the day when Maréchal de Belleisle heard of the death of his son, the Comte de Gisors. He bore that event with great fortitude. The king, the queen, and the royal family honoured him with a visit. I value that great distinction to the maréchal; it was not without some difficulty that the king brought himself to give it; but it must be said to his glory that he spoke to his minister with a nobleness and kindness both touching and remarkable.

Nothing could persuade Maréchal d'Estrées to go to the army; neither the kindness of the king, nor the entreaties of his friend Maréchal de Belleisle, nor the urgency of the marquise, who told him, in my presence, that the king would make him a duke if he would command his army. The maréchal replied that his health would not permit it, for the king's sake, and that he would not do it for the greatest fortune that could be offered to him.

M. de Contades then took the command of the army, as I have previously said. Prince Ferdinand quietly re-crossed the Rhine without being attacked. This withdrawal of the allies was brought about by a diversion in Hesse that I had proposed and which was executed by the twenty-four thousand men which the Prince de Soubise was to take to the army of the empress. That princess lent herself generously to our needs. But it is remarkable that a minister of Foreign Affairs, and a churchman, should have proposed this diversion to a marshal of France charged with the details of the war. I took upon myself all the embarrassment of breaking an engagement I had contracted in person. If I had not proposed that expedient no one would have thought of it, or ventured to indicate it, for fear that I should oppose it.

Maréchal d'Estrées remained in the Council, aided by Maréchal de Belleisle, during the rest of that campaign. If he had always had as much repugnance to command the army as he showed on this occasion, he would have preserved the military reputation which the victory of Hastembeck gave him, and to which the faults of his successors had greatly contributed. He is an honest man, a man of worth, who has great general qualities; but his views are not as extended as his sentiments are honest and honourable.

In reading what I am now about to relate, persons will accuse me with justice of boldness and temerity if they are not informed as to the confidence which the king had granted me on the points most closely related to his sacred person and to the royal family. The king for many years had no longer any love for Mme. de Pompadour, and certainly his friendship for her was very pure; it was based far more on habit and on business than on the difference of sex. He would have liked to put an end to the scandal he had given to the Court and the public without separating from a woman who was always useful to him and often agreeable.

He spoke to me of all the consultations he had had with the Sorbonne and even with Rome. His Jesuit confessors, who are often accused of relaxed morals, admitted of no compromise; they did not believe that the scandal could be otherwise removed than by the dismissal of the marquise. If some of their enemies were ever to read this they would not fail to explain this rigour by the certainty these Jesuit fathers had of being protected by the dauphin, a protection more safe and honourable for them than that of a favourite. However this may be, it is certain that if they had been more lax they could, with a little skill, have retained the dauphin and managed the marquise. They refused to do so from the first years that the latter appeared at Court; I know this positively; the dauphin was then a mere child, and his protection had no weight. They had been accused, in the days of the late king, of being friends of Mme. de Maintenon, and they did not wish to incur the same blame; so that it may be said that if they were Molinists then, they were Jansenists now on this point. The king has religion; he has never wished to follow in his Christian conduct any but the sternest maxims; he has preferred to abstain from the sacraments rather than profane them. This is a justice that I have been more

in a position to do to him than any other man. His taste for women has carried the day over his love for religion, but he has never smothered the respect which he feels for it, and I do not believe, now that I no longer read into his soul that he has changed or that he can change in this respect.

The king had permitted me to write to him on all that related to his affairs, and even to his person. I wrote, leaving half the page for margin, on which his Majesty wrote his answers, and often they were as good as Henri IV. could have written. The courtiers judged of my favour only by the places I filled and the air of familiarity and ease which his Majesty was kind enough to have with me; but no one ever knew to what extent that kindness really went.

All these preliminaries are necessary to explain the step, that I took to save the marquise, who was jealous of a woman of the Court, with whom the king had already had some gallantries. The liking of the king for her had revived, and this woman was backed by powerful friends and advised by the enemies of the marquise, who were many in number. The latter had asked the king's permission to retire; the king had not yet made her any answer; she was awaiting it. Finding her very sad one day, she confided to me her situation, the step she had taken, and the consolation it would be to her, on quitting the Court, to leave in my person, so she said, "a minister who was an honest man, enlightened, and according to the king's heart."

I cannot express the emotion I felt, but I mastered it in a moment and said to her: "Madame, it is not thus that a minister of State should prove his sentiments." I rose and was about to leave her cabinet but she held me back and forced me to tell her what I meant to do. I replied that I should write to the king and represent to him how much a new acknowledged mistress would injure his reputation, his

affairs, and give umbrage to the Court of Vienna, which had addressed itself to her, Mme. de Pompadour, in the matter of its alliance with him; and that as a new mistress would surely change all that her predecessor had established, the empress would no longer have confidence in the stability of the new political system of France; I said also that I should declare to the king that I certainly would not work with another woman who had no rights of friendship and of gratitude over me.

The marquise trembled at my resolution. She made me feel that I exposed myself to the king's displeasure in speaking to him with such freedom, and that if he had the weakness to show my letter to the new mistress I ran still greater risks. To this I replied firmly that I saw all that, but the worst that could happen to me would be to be driven from my office by the new favourite, who, knowing my intimacy with the old one, would always regard me with suspicion, and would set everything to work to thwart the alliance between the king and the Court of Vienna. I knew the counsellor of that woman, and I knew he was opposed to the new system.[1]

In spite of Mme. de Pompadour's terrors, I did write to the king; and never was the truth told to a sovereign with greater firmness; and I concluded by saying that if the king persisted in declaring a new mistress, I entreated him to allow me to retire. I carried the letter to the marquise, who wept with wonder and gratitude at finding so courageous a friendship in me. But, satisfied to know the state of my heart, she would not consent that the letter should be given to the king. I sealed it immediately, and as the king entered the room a moment later I waited until his Majesty left it;

[1] She was Marie-Anne-Louise-Adélaïde de Mailly, wife of the Marquis de Coislin. — Tr.

then I followed him and gave him my letter, entreating him to give it great attention and an early reply.

The reply was not long in coming; the king himself gave it to me the next day, and I carried it, still unsealed, to the marquise. In it the king spoke to me with the greatest frankness and good-will; he recounted the good qualities of the marquise, also her defects, and promised me to renounce the liking he had taken for her rival, because he felt the danger for his affairs, and for his reputation.

Who would believe that Mme. de Pompadour, ten months after such a service, was capable of sacrificing me to her infatuation for the Duc de Choiseul, far more than to the fear persons sought to inspire in her of the influence I was getting over the mind of the king, and of the friendship that the royal family had for me? I had often wounded her self-love in combating her opinion on public matters. Partly from levity, partly from self-love, partly from jealousy of power, she urged my dismissal with an importunity to which the king yielded at last, after I had myself resigned the department of Foreign Affairs; as soon as a minister ceases to be necessary, he is already half overthrown.

M. de Machault, instigated by the devout men and women of the Court, had advised Mme. de Pompadour to refrain from going to the theatre, to hear mass daily, and to go to vespers on Sundays and feast days; in a word, to put on the semblance of piety. M. de Soubise had recommended to her Père de Sacy, a Jesuit, for her confessor; but the latter would not accept the mission; the destruction of his Order in France came in a great measure from this refusal. M. Berryer, lieutenant of police, a confidant of the marquise, who possessed the secret of frightening and reassuring her alternately, as it suited him, through the spying of his police, chose her a confessor, who thought her in a condition to

perform her Easter duties without renouncing the society of the king, and consequently without, as the Jesuits had insisted, repairing the scandal. She confided to me one day this pious intrigue, excusing herself for having concealed it from me. I had the courage to tell her that the comedy imposed upon no one; that she would only be thought false and hypocritical; and that, as she was not touched in heart, piety would soon end by wearying her; moreover, she gave cause for ridicule in taking up devotion, and would give still greater cause by dropping it from ennui. My prediction did not please her, but it came true to the letter shortly after the return of the Duc de Choiseul.

The marquise had none of the great vices of ambitious women; but she had all the petty follies and fickleness of women who are in love with their own beauty and the so-called superiority of their mind; she did harm without being malignant, and she did good impulsively; her friendship was jealous as love, volatile, inconstant as love, and never certain.

M. de Paulmy, on leaving the ministry of war, kept for some time longer his place in the Council. M. de Moras got rid of the finance department shortly after his appointment as secretary of State for the navy; the taking of Louisbourg completed the loss of the little credit that remained to him. As for M. Rouillé, he played so insignificant a part in the Council that in spite of his wife's taste for the Court, he felt at last that he was out of place there. There remained in the Council of State only Maréchal de Belleisle, Maréchal d'Estrées, M. de Saint-Florentin, and myself. These three ministers were very unanimous and harmonious with me, and if I had had the ambition that my enemies feigned to believe I had, it would have been easy for me to play the first rôle in the Council. But as, in point of fact, I should only have had in the eyes of the public the appearance of

that situation and not the reality of it, I thought it was playing too great a stake and running too many risks for the State. I therefore asked Mme. de Pompadour to induce the king to reinforce his Council with men who were capable of raising its reputation. This proposal displeased her, and she said sharply: "Why do you want new ministers? Are not you the master?" "Madame," I said, "it is because I am not the master, and do not wish to be, and still less to have the air of being so, that I ask for help and for knowledge and ideas. I am not asking for tools, but for men, who will reassure the public by their lights and their ideas. We need," I said, "a political minister, a minister well versed in law and forms, to prevent excitement throughout the kingdom from the violation of them. If you had no complaint against M. de Maurepas I should propose him to you for the interior affairs of the kingdom, and, if I were in your place, I should have the grandeur of soul to recall him; but you are far from thinking as I do. Also, it is for you, Madame to select the minister who is needed in the Council for whatever concerns the clergy and parliament; as soon as that man enters it, I will either concert matters with him, or I will relinquish to him the portfolio of affairs relating to those two bodies."

This last proposition mollified the marquise; she saw her way to bring M. Berryer into the Council of State as she had already brought him into the Council of Despatches when I had proposed to admit there M. Gilbert de Voisins. The selection of a minister for the internal politics seemed to her more difficult; but, for the good of the thing, and to cure her mind of the fears my enemies had already inspired in it of my ambition, I proposed to her (in case the king did not retain his dislike to him) to recall the former Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin. The marquise knew that I did not

even know him by sight, that he did not approve of the Treaty of Versailles, and that his reputation in Europe stood high. This proposal astonished her. "You see," I said, "that after eighteen years' acquaintance and friendship, you are still very far from knowing me; I do not ask to have my friends associated with me in the ministry, nor men over whom I could obtain an ascendancy; I ask, on the contrary, for men who are considered the most enlightened."

She promised to speak of this to the king; I do not know whether she did so; but a few days later she told me that I must no longer think of M. Chauvelin, and that it would be better to seek among the ambassadors for a man whom the king could make minister of State. I proposed to her the Duc de Nivernais, [Louis-Jules Mancini Mazarini], but she excluded him as relation and friend of M. de Maurepas. None of the old or the new ambassadors suiting her, I insisted on the recall of the Marquis de Puysieux, a man she had greatly liked, and now liked no longer. She objected that this minister would not re-enter the Council on account of his health. I assured her he would never resist the king's wishes, if his Majesty did him the honour to ask him to return. M. de Puysieux obeyed; but on condition that after peace was made he should be allowed to retire. He carried this out; such wisdom and such moderation presuppose many virtues.

M. Berryer, as a former magistrate, was chosen by Mme. de Pompadour. This man did me more harm than all the rest of the Court put together; he kept spies upon my house, my person, and my friends, and made a very bad use with the marquise of speeches, often insignificant, and sometimes imprudent, made by persons who piqued themselves on having friendship with me. Mme. de Pompadour was persuaded that Berryer's vigilance had saved her a dozen times

from poison or dagger; she had no liking for that coarse and bourgeois man, but she believed he was necessary to her safety. She made him, soon after, minister of the navy and Keeper of the Seals; a premature death delivered France from his hands.

The Marquis de Paulmy, after his retirement from the ministry of war, desired to return to the career of ambassador; I offered him that of Poland, just vacant through the recall of the Comte de Broglie; he accepted it some time later. Meantime I sent to that Court, where a thousand intrigues had embroiled our affairs, the Marquis de Monteil, formerly the king's minister in Cologne, a man of intelligence, a wise man, on whose integrity and fidelity I could count. After my dismissal, he had the prudence to ask for his recall, and to be allowed to resign his embassy under honourable conditions.

As soon as M. de Puysieux and Maréchal d'Estrées were fairly established in the Council, I busied myself with four things: (1) to give form to the government; (2) to relieve the finances; (3) to force the Court of Vienna to keep its word, and treat for peace during the winter of 1759; (4) to make sure of means to continue the war in case that peace could not be concluded as soon as I desired for the good of France, and for the interests, properly understood, of our allies.

The Duc de Choiseul, not being as yet aware of the cooling of Mme. de Pompadour's friendship for me, and seeing that the affairs of the alliance were slackening, risked, as sole remedy, a proposal to Mme. de Pompadour that the king should appoint me prime-minister. I blamed that step very much, and I even regarded it more as a malignancy than as a service. The marquise showed me her friend's letter, which was very strong, assuring me that she should

not show it to the king, for fear it should make him take an aversion to the Duc de Choiseul. She agreed that this course would, perhaps, be the best to take, but that the king had an invincible repugnance to having a prime-minister. It is certain that his mistress had strong interest in persuading him that he would be putting himself under tutelage and choosing a master, if he thus confided his authority to a subject. A woman fancies she does less harm to a king when it is she who has possession of his confidence and his power; or, if she does not really believe this, she is very glad to have the king imagine it.

I easily convinced the marquise that the Duc de Choiseul had taken this step without my knowledge; but what astonished me much was, that in the answer she made to the duke, she did not scold him for the proposal he had made, but agreed, in good faith, that the king could not take a wiser course, although he was repugnant to it. The more fully to convince the marquise how little I desired to make myself master of affairs, I proposed to her to present to the king a plan of government, in which plan I was reduced to my single voice in the Council.

In the memorial I then drew up, I established the necessity of unity, harmony, and reciprocal correspondence between all parts of the government; also the necessity that each part should lead to a common centre, whence it should derive its impulse and direction in harmony with that given to the other branches. This centre is necessarily the king, to give orders; but to spare him the long discussions requisite for the proper conduct of affairs, I proposed that those of the State should be discussed in committees composed of the chief Council, and when needful of the Council of Despatches also, at which the controller-general of finances should invariably be present. I asked that these

committees should, in the first place, examine into all expenditures, in order to diminish them where possible; that the said examination should begin in the king's household, and then extend to all the departments of the Secretary of State, and finally to all sources of expenditure whatsoever; furthermore, that all the chief affairs of the interior and of foreign parts should be examined and probed in these committees, which cannot be done at the king's Council where his Majesty presides, because, besides the fatigue long sessions would be to him, his presence too often prevents the frank expression of opinion.

These committees, thus proposed, were to be held three times a week at the house of the minister of State whose rank constituted precedence; all decisions were to be registered; every question was to be decided by plurality of votes; each decision to be signed by all, and submitted to the king for its endorsement, or for its re-formation in whole or in part, as his Majesty might think proper. The marquise was to give the king these decisions signed by the ministers; this was retaining for her a very honourable function; but it must be owned that it took from her the reins of government, and gave them to the Councils of the king. All men of sense, and all good citizens will think that it was enough to leave to a woman, and a former mistress, the influence to give favours and offices at Court, and that it was just and reasonable to prevent her from deciding the serious affairs of the State according to her fancy.

By this plan the king's Council became the prime-minister of his Majesty; it was then a question of wisely choosing the members, and of introducing zeal, experience, matured judgment, and ideas. The State would thus have been well governed, and in these committees each minister would have had no more than his one vote. I know very well that the

ablest and most adroit among them would have had more influence than others; but even so it could only be by attracting the greater number of votes that such men could influence the decisions. Moreover, each minister would be more courageous in proposing the reform of abuses, because the whole Council, and not that particular minister, would be the author and promoter of the said reformation.

By this arrangement, I reduced myself to my single vote in the Council. If my opinions were there followed in preference it might fairly be supposed they were better founded than those of my colleagues, because none of them had any desire to make me play the leading rôle. This was so well known to Mme. de Pompadour that, whether she was weary of public affairs and of the bad success of the war, or because she dared not oppose so wise a plan, it is certain that she feigned to adopt it. Not only that, but she obtained the approval of the king, to whom it gave more tranquillity, by the reflection that each decision was not the opinion of a single minister, but that of his whole Council.

The secretaries of State, by this arrangement, were no longer despotic in their functions. They were obliged to submit their conduct to the examination of the committee; they could only propose new expenditures when working with the king, by approbation of the Council and of the controller-general of finances; on whom at the present time, they all drew, without informing him, and without knowing whether there were sufficient funds to meet the proposed expenses; an incredible vice in our government, and one which reduces the minister of finance to the single rôle of a bank-cashier; forcing him to find money for every demand, and exposing him to lose his place when funds are lacking, at the time when his capacity is most needed to fill it.

These details suffice to indicate the advantages and the

extent of the plan I presented and which the king accepted; an intelligent mind can easily seize the ramifications of it. I shall content myself with saying that after an assiduous labour of four months the Council, gathered in committee, found that without diminishing the splendour of the king's establishment, and without cramping his pleasures, they could, as a first reform, retrench six millions from the annual cost of his Majesty's household. The committee presented its decision, signed, to the king; all the valets and all the offices cried out against it, so that this reform, which would have led to others, was reduced to about a hundred thousand crowns which the king was willing to retrench; his kindness not being able to withstand the outcries and complaints of those who were interested in the preservation of these abuses.

After the household of the king, I set the example to the other secretaries of State of submitting the costs of our respective departments to the revision of the Council. Although my ministry was the most secret of all, I raised the veil that covered it, and I proposed myself the retrenchment of half the subsidies, with a promise, given later, of carrying this reduction still farther in profiting by all circumstances which might bring our allies to consent to it willingly. The Council applauded the courage with which I executed myself, but when it became a question of reforming the expenditures of the war department, Maréchal de Belleisle eluded that examination by bringing on the tapis the question of the expenses of the navy. This department had recently been placed in charge of M. de Massiac, now a vice-admiral, to whom Mme. de Pompadour had given as assistant, or rather as master, a relation of her husband. As the navy was the most essential department of all, it was agreed to examine it first.

It is necessary that I should say here that the first labours of

the committee turned to the administration of the finances, as being the most important department and the one that was in the most confusion. As we went along, the committee attended to the urgent affairs of some of the other departments, but the first object was the re-establishment of order in the finances, before concerning ourselves seriously with the other branches of the government.

When the affairs of the navy, hitherto ignored by the king's Council (the ministers in charge of that department managing its affairs with the king and never taking advice of the Council), when, I say, the interior of that administration was brought to light, the whole Council shuddered at so vicious an administration on the financial side. There was no accounting, no order; letters of exchange drawn on the royal treasury were not accounted for or settled until several years after date; the commissaries [*intendants*] were purchasers and revisers of expenditures; in short, the department was a chaos, an abyss of abuses and false principles of administration. It is not astonishing that a machine so ill-mounted came near destruction. A commission was appointed to sift the accounts and draw up a schedule of debts. M. Berryer succeeded M. de Massiac.

I was exiled in the month of December, 1758. The plan of government which I proposed and which had been carried on for six months was abandoned; it required serious and steady work for three days in the week, and that was thought inconvenient. As soon as I was gone the committees only assembled after fortuitous events which demanded some special action for the interior of the kingdom; all the other departments of the government were abandoned to the sole will of each minister; there was no longer any union or common centre; Mme. de Pompadour resumed the tiller which the committee of the council had taken from her; the

old disorders recovered their sway and were multiplied by new abuses.

It was said, after my dismissal, that I had aimed at becoming prime-minister. Here, however, was a plan very much opposed to that aim, which I not only caused to be adopted, but which was put in execution for six months in sight and knowledge of the Court and of all France. It is true that I had felt the necessity of a directing power in the affairs of the kingdom, and I had conveyed that power to the king's Council; surely that was a means to prevent my having it. But when I was exiled something had to be told to the public on the subject of my dismissal. They talked of my ambition, because that vague accusation is always thought probable of a minister; but well-informed persons who remembered my views and the principles I had established in the government, saw in them only the good citizen and in no sense the ambitious man.

XIII.

1758. — The Cardinal's Hat. — Affairs of Spain. — The Affair of the Jesuits in France.

AFTER my return from my embassy to Venice I questioned Mme. de Pompadour about the king's motive in refusing his consent to my appointment, in 1754, as ambassador to the Court of Poland in place of M. de Broglie. She replied that the king did not wish to send an ecclesiastical ambassador to Warsaw because men of that cloth usually employ that position in trying to make sure of a cardinal's hat, and he did not wish me to attain that dignity. I had not thought myself, up to that time, within reach of aspiring to it; but after I knew the sentiments of the king I drove the idea from me as a bad thought. I had then just ended, to the satisfaction of the pope, the differences which His Holiness had had with the Republic of Venice. The Courts of France and Vienna had hitherto employed their good office in vain. The pope was old; he feared he might end his career with little glory if this affair were not settled before he died. At first he thought I was too favourable to the Venetians; but on being better informed, he asked the king to withdraw the negotiation from the hands of M. Rouillé, minister of Foreign Affairs, and place it wholly in mine. The expedient which I proposed gave satisfaction to the Holy See without wounding the sovereignty of the Republic. Benedict XIV. was transported with joy on hearing of its success, and he said, as to me: "Let him obtain the consent of the Courts of Vienna and Madrid and I will make

him a cardinal." They sent me word of this from Rome, but I paid no attention to it because by that time I knew the king's sentiments.

The Duc de Choiseul, our ambassador at Vienna, and formerly at Rome, still kept up, by consent of the king, a direct correspondence with the pope. His Holiness, who had already addressed Cardinal de Tencin asking to be informed if it would be agreeable to the king that I should be made cardinal, not being, apparently, satisfied with the reply of that Eminence, wrote in the summer of 1758 to the Duc de Choiseul asking him the same question. The latter, without waiting for orders from the king, replied that His Holiness could not doubt, seeing the confidence with which the king honoured me, that his Majesty would be very glad to see me clothed in the Roman purple. He sent me a courier informing me of the pope's letter and his reply. My first impulse was to fear that M. de Choiseul had dealt me a blow under pretence of doing me service. I sent his despatch and the pope's letter to the king, expressing my fear that his Majesty would suspect me of conducting this intrigue with his ambassador. The king, after a Council, called me into his chamber, and said to me, "Are you very sorry?" "Yes, Sire," I answered, "I am, because not only have I done nothing to draw to me this dignity, but I protest that I am incapable of having had even the idea of it without being authorized by your will." The king answered me in these words: "Reassure yourself; I know that you have not worked to obtain the hat, and I think you incapable of thinking of it without being assured of my consent. I take upon myself to scold M. de Choiseul, and you will reply to him, from me, that if the pope wishes to make you a cardinal I presume he will say something to me about it." I thanked the king, but I scolded M. de Choiseul a little

for his heedlessness; I believed that nothing further would come of the matter, because it was probable that if the pope should write to the king, the latter, while thanking him, would say that the favour was premature.

Mme. de Pompadour appeared to be much pleased with this affair; I was not yet injured in her mind; and when I reminded her of the repugnance the king had expressed to her some years earlier at the time of the embassy to Poland, she said that things had changed since then, that the king did not know me well at that time, and I was not then, as now, his confidential minister.

Three weeks or a month after the answer I had made to the Duc de Choiseul, a courier arrived from him bringing me the most flattering consent from the emperor and empress. Connt Kaunitz, in a letter to the Duc de Choiseul, sent word that the empress exacted that the dignity of cardinal should not prevent me from keeping the ministry of Foreign Affairs; nothing could be more courteous than that condition. As soon as I received the despatch I no longer doubted that the king had authorized the Duc de Choiseul to treat of the affair with the pope. I sent M. de Choiseul's packet to Mme. de Pompadour, who, after communicating it to the king, sent me a little note which I still have: "Eh! quick, abbé! the king orders you to send a courier to Madrid to ask the consent of the king, his cousin."

I answered the marquise immediately that a special courier would cost much money, which the king ought not to spend on my private affairs, but I would take advantage of an express which the empress's ambassador intended to despatch in a few days. In the interval, the pope having written to his nuncio in Spain to ask his Catholic Majesty's consent to my promotion, that king gave it at once and had despatched a courier to his ambassador in France to inform

the king, and another to Cardinal Portocarrero, his minister to the Court of Rome, to ask the pope that out of regard to the crown of Spain I might be made cardinal singly, and not in a general promotion.

When the consent of the Court of Madrid reached Versailles, instead of sending it immediately to Rome by a special courier, as I might have done, I sent it by the ordinary route, always with the idea of saving the king's money; so that it happened that these consents did not reach Rome until two nights before the pope's death. The king felt that event very much; he loved the pope, who loved him. On reading the instructions that I was sending to our ambassador in Rome, Cardinal de Rochechouart, the king told me to add that as soon as the new pope was elected, the ambassador was to remind him of the promise made by the late pope to create me a cardinal at the next promotion, which was done. The new pope promised to ratify the former pledge, and it was then, July, 1758, that I publicly thanked the king for the favour granted to me.

The bickerings between Mme. de Pompadour and me were at that moment very sharp; M. Berryer and part of the Court excited them; we had perpetual explanations. They had made her afraid of my red hat. They represented to her that cardinals were always ambitious of playing the first rôles, and that I could never resist the temptations attached to that dignity. This was pushed so far that finally, after an angry scene, I declared I would ask the king for permission to thank the pope and renounce the hat. I made this request to the king before the whole Council, and his Majesty refused his consent. The dauphin and all the ministers were astonished that I could make so light of so great a dignity. I was not sorry to prove that I held but little to fortune and was sensitive only to reputation.

The intrigues of my enemies went so far that the pope was told in Rome that I and Cardinal Dubois were as like as two drops of water, that I had been married two years, and that I was the author of infamous poems. The pope, who had known me in Venice, rebuffed these malignancies, about which I took care to tell the king, who laughed at them. My enemies stirred up Portugal to oppose my promotion by a new claim which it tried to make successful at my expense, namely: that the hat could not be given without Portugal's consent. The King of Sardinia, whom they tried to excite to the same game, sent his opposition at once, which Cardinal Archinto, the pope's secretary of State, declined to receive. Everything was done to thwart, or at any rate hinder my promotion; they even corrupted the couriers I sent to Rome, to delay their arrival. The pope fell ill, Cardinal Archinto died suddenly before the Consistory. But in spite of all these accidents and all these intrigues, the pope declared me cardinal October 2, 1758.

The day the courier arrived with the news the king showed his joy publicly before the foreign ministers, so that many of them wrote to their Courts that I was certain to be declared prime-minister. These letters were opened in the post, and Mme. de Pompadour, who could no longer endure me, persuaded the king, no doubt easily, that I should force his hand if he did not exile me to one of my abbeys. It is to be remarked that the day on which the courier arrived from Rome was the very one in which the king permitted me, in a letter full of kindness, to resign the ministry of Foreign Affairs. The day of the ceremony of the hat, just two weeks before my exile, the king heaped kindnesses upon me in public. As he placed the beretta on my head he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by every one, "I have never made so noble a cardinal."

It was told everywhere that my harangue was that of a prime-minister; it will be found at the end of these Memoirs. I knew it was planned to spread that rumour, therefore it would have been my own fault if that harangue had really had that tone. The assembly of the clergy and all the foreign ministers were present at the ceremony.

The king replied to my harangue in these words: "Monsieur le Cardinal, after the noble harangue which you have just made I can wish for nothing else than to see all that you there announce executed." I knew, when I pronounced that speech that my dismissal was determined on. Persons said much about the one I made to the dauphin, which was thought to be very adroit. They did not understand the meaning of that I made to the king.[1]

His Majesty had created for me a new department for the affairs of the clergy and parliament. He had given me clerks, and had allowed me to announce this determination to the assembly of the clergy and to parliament, no doubt to stop all rumours, which were already beginning to be whispered, of my dismissal, which it was unadvisable to execute until after parliament had registered the fiscal edicts.

It was also spread about in public that Madame Infanta, who honoured me with her kindness, and, if it is permissible to say so, with her friendship, had, through the channel of the Princess Trivulce, her lady of honour, sister to Cardinal Archinto, negotiated the gift of my hat. Neither had even dreamed of it; besides which, the king had forbidden me to speak of it to them before the declaration of the gift was made.

It remains to clear up the zeal that the Duc de Choiseul put into this affair. Discrimination of periods will explain

[1] These speeches have apparently not been preserved; they are not in the published volumes. — TR.

the enigma. When the pope addressed him I was still on good terms with the marquise, as I was also when he sent me the consent of the Court of Vienna. It will be remembered that the Duc de Choiseul had proposed to Mme. de Pompadour to induce the king to give me the chief authority in his kingdom; not succeeding in that, he was very glad to contribute to my elevation through the dignity of cardinal; he thought me irremovable, and he knew that I was not ungrateful. The cooling of Mme. de Pompadour towards me did not show itself until it was no longer possible to take the hat away from me. I proved my gratitude in begging the king to make him my successor in the ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was readily granted to me, for it was what Mme. de Pompadour, since our quarrels began, had most desired, all the while feigning to be sorry for it.

I remember that as I returned from the chapel of Versailles after the ceremony of the hat, a courtier, seeing me surrounded by the clergy, the parliament, and the foreign ministers, said to me, "Monsieur le cardinal, this is indeed a fine day," I answered, "Say rather, a good umbrella." I knew that my dismissal was impending. The dignity of cardinal sensibly increased the number of my enemies and the uneasiness of Mme. de Pompadour; it also excited the jealousy of the other ministers of the king, and I saw plainly that it would not save me from dismissal. But after I was exiled I found it a good gift indeed, for from the harsh manner in which I was treated, and the temper that Mme. de Pompadour showed openly against me, I do not know whether, without this dignity, worse might not have happened to me.

It was at this time [summer of 1758] that the question of the finances became imperative. The king had vainly endeavoured to obtain some succour in money from the King of

Spain; the empress had also taken the same step, fruitlessly; the reluctance that the controller-general and his subordinates showed in finding resources had forced the king to this false step. There appeared to be a conspiracy among bankers and financiers to compel the war to end for want of money, and this conspiracy had begun at the first campaign; the controller-general and M. Pâris-Montmartel were persuaded by these men that as long as they supplied the money the war would last, and that the only way to end it was to convince the ministry that it was impossible to obtain funds. It is easy to see that such a course was imprudent, and even criminal; it caused the failure of operations, because they were not prepared for in time; and the king was unable to keep the engagements he had made with his allies; in vain had I reduced the subsidies; money grew more and more scarce. Nevertheless, they did find enough to continue the war for four years after the first two campaigns; but the pressure was pushed so far that the king's stable lacked hay and oats, and the ministers were, for some time, obliged to pay out of their own pockets the couriers they sent on the king's business in and out of the kingdom. The famine forced M. de Silhouette, controller-general, successor of M. de Boullongne, to invite all subjects of the king to bring their gold and silver-plate and their jewels to the Mint, — a vicious scheme, which completed the ruin of our credit and contracted fresh debts for the king; this scheme had already been presented to me, and I had rejected it.

Seeing that the condition of the finances had caused the diversion agreed upon with Denmark to fail, I set everything to work to induce the Court of Vienna to consent to the assembling of a congress in the winter of 1758–9, so that the operations of the next campaign might not have to be suspended; I endeavoured also to make our private

peace with England, which would have led, necessarily, to the general peace. M. Richard Wall, the Spanish minister of Foreign Affairs, had an excellent understanding with me; I had managed already to cure the Queen of Spain, all-powerful over the mind of her husband, Ferdinand VI., of the distrust she had conceived of a project she supposed France to entertain of dragging Spain into the war; she at last understood that my system was not to associate Spain in our quarrels, but to make it play the finer part of mediator in our differences with England. She then agreed to make her mediation effective by putting into condition her land and sea forces; and the Comte de Fuentès was to come and receive his instructions in my cabinet on his way to negotiate in England; all was agreed upon and settled in this respect.

This first step prepared the way for a second; on which I had as yet opened myself only half-way to the ministry of Madrid; this was to persuade that Court to accede to the Treaty of Versailles so far as it related to Italy. Spain had even more interest than ourselves in the security of her princes; it would not have been difficult for me to have led the Spanish minister to this as soon as he was convinced that we did not seek to involve him in the affairs of Germany on the continent, nor in the maritime war for the defence of our colonies — though I did succeed in showing him that the French colonies were the boulevard of the Spanish colonies. The adhesion of Spain to the Treaty of Vienna secured the peace of Italy, as it would, some day, secure peace to the interior of Spain.

The death of the Queen of Spain, August 27, 1758, disconcerted all these great projects; it was impossible to rouse King Ferdinand from the deep melancholy into which that death threw him; he could not be brought to sign the in-

structions of Comte Fuentès, whose departure was delayed from day to day. The condition of his Catholic Majesty becoming worse and worse and yet being likely to last a long time, I redoubled my efforts to bring the Court of Vienna to work for peace. But the Duc de Choiseul, who, until then had seconded my pacific intentions with all his power, began to change his views as soon as he learned that Mme. de Pompadour had no longer the same confidence in me, and had made the king fear that in urging the Court of Vienna so strongly to fulfil a promise it had given in a moment of consternation after the defeat at Lissa and the taking of Breslau, I should end by embroiling the king with the empress. The Duc de Choiseul then changed his tone, argued against peace, and was authorized to do so by private orders, of which I was informed by accident only.

It was under these circumstances that the Marquis de Puysieux said to me one day after a session of the Council: "Have you perceived that for some time past your ministry of Foreign Affairs is being carried on in Vienna?" "Of course I have perceived it," I answered; "but I shall extricate myself from that difficulty as soon as I can." What followed that answer I shall presently relate.

In the beginning of September, 1758, I learned the news of the attempted assassination of the King of Portugal. This event did not shock the king as much as I feared; perhaps he was even glad to feel that he was not the only king in Europe against whose life there were conspiracies, and that France was not the only kingdom which gave birth to regicides. It was more than two years after this attempt to murder his Portuguese Majesty that I first connected with it certain terrible things which a man of rank in Portugal had announced to me some years previously as certain to happen in his country at the close of 1755.

After the above attempt, I was able to see that the plot had long been laid; and there can be no doubt that certain Jesuits, friends of the conspirators, were either their confidants or their accomplices. This was the real origin of their expulsion from France in 1664, which might not have taken place if the Jesuits had behaved in a better manner.

When Mme. de Pompadour first appeared at Court a sensible friend advised her to be on good terms with the Jesuits, because those worthy fathers could incline the clergy in her favour. She felt the wisdom of that advice, but the Jesuits refused to sign the treaty. They represented that conscience and caution were equally opposed to this alliance, however secret. It was thought that this austerity came less from their principles of morality than from the assurance given them of the dauphin's protection, which they regarded as more solid and more honourable for them than that of a king's mistress. However that may be, I have shown already that his Majesty's confessors would none of them lend themselves to any compromise or arrangement, but always insisted, as the only reparation for the scandal, on the dismissal of the marquise. Père de Sacy refused the direction of her conscience, so that it was impossible for her to consider the Jesuits as her friends. M. Berryer, her confidant, and, to tell the whole truth, her spy, did not like the Jesuits; the Duc de Choiseul, with whom the marquise was long infatuated, did not like the Jesuits, and the whole nation had long been openly opposed to their Society.

The attempted assassination of the King of Portugal put weapons in the hands of their enemies with which to alarm the king lest their morality was really favourable to regicides. The party called Jansenists had not failed to cast the attempted assassination of the king on the Jesuits, declaring

that they ought to be regarded as the originators of it and the ones who were to reap the fruits. The Jesuits being specially protected by the dauphin, the Jansenists claimed that they had all to gain by the death of the king.

Parliament had never been favourable to the Jesuits; the trial of Damiens made it more than ever opposed to the Society. It was in the midst of all this that the affair of Léonci, which made such excitement, happened. The Jesuits, instead of hushing up that affair by paying their creditors, treated them harshly and with arrogance; and instead of letting the matter be tried before the Grand Council, where their affairs properly belonged, they thought, on a false assumption, that by taking that of Léonci before parliament they should disarm that tribunal by this act of ridiculous and misplaced confidence; they were the dupes of their own craft.[1]

Parliament, in order to judge of the liability of the Jesuits, ordered a report on its constitutions; these were examined rigorously and denounced to the king, to the public, and to the clergy, as containing principles opposed to all good government. To this were joined extracts from their theologians and moralists which offered a picture of the most pernicious opinions. The Court allowed parliament to act. The principal ministers advised the Jesuits not to defend themselves, because they themselves would take their side when the right moment came; the fathers followed this fatal advice.

Parliament, seeing that the king was letting everything go with great strides towards the destruction of the Order in France, struck the final blow; and the king found himself

[1] This affair was the bankruptcy of Père la Valette and the lawsuits that followed it. The house of Léonci was the firm in Marseille which was most involved in the bankruptcy. — Fr. Ed.

under the necessity of confirming by a declaration the decrees of his parliament, or of allowing the destruction of a Society he had hitherto protected to be effectuated without the concurrence of his authority. When the affair began, neither the Court, nor parliament, nor the public, imagined that it would go so far; but one step followed another, and the goal was reached almost without its being thought of.

The clergy of France, by dint of wishing to be favourable to the Jesuits, hastened their ruin. They could have sustained them if, by demanding the reform of what was vicious in their constitutions, in their exemption from the rule of the bishops, and in many of their lives, the clergy had held the place of judges, and not that of panegyrists. Everything worked together for their ruin, and it must be admitted that what conduced to it most was the penury of the Society in great things; for the last twenty years it had greatly degenerated; two or three great preachers or writers among them might have averted the storm, because the public would have stood up in favour of great men.

Besides this, all the other religious orders and, in general, the clergy of France revolted against the arrogance with which the Jesuits behaved to them. Several bishops had grounds to complain of the despotism they tried to exercise in their dioceses. The Jesuits had treated their enemies without mercy, and they were now treated in the same way; the stones of Port-Royal which they rased to the ground fell back upon their own heads.

This extraordinary event had, however, been long preparing; it was retarded by the confidence the late king, Louis XIV., had given to them. The reigning king, while protecting them, had always feared their intrigues; men of letters, and all those who are called philosophers had often cause to complain of their newspaper, printed at Trévoux. Their

old influence was rejected; the mediocrity of their members inspired contempt, and their pride was no longer pardoned, because it was now apart from talents and merit.

It was the combination of all these circumstances which rendered possible the destruction of a society whose branches were so wide-spreading in France, and its roots so deep. The revolt of Madrid, in which they were accused by the King of Spain himself of being implicated, their expulsion from the States of his Catholic Majesty, and the violent conduct of the Court of Rome towards the Infant Philip, Duke of Parma, which the Jesuits were accused of having instigated, completed the opposition felt in Europe against them. It really seemed as if a vertigo had seized them and made them no longer resemble their true selves.

Nevertheless, if they are not wholly destroyed under a new pontificate, and, corrected by their own faults, if they should become wiser, more modest, more politic, more chastened in their moral writings, less contemptuous of the other Orders, more submissive to the bishops, less presuming with the clergy, and — above all — if there should rise among them great writers, learned men, good preachers, it is not impossible that they might recover from their fall, and regain, little by little, a part at least of the ground they have lost. This revolution seems to-day incredible; but a small number of favourable circumstances might bring it about. It needs but the two kings of France and Spain to think favourably of the Society in those countries; and when they recover influence in two great Courts they will soon have it in all others. Will this be a good, or will it be an evil? That is what we cannot decide as yet. They have been useful and injurious, they can still be the one or the other. Nevertheless, if, instead of letting them govern, they had been governed, we may boldly say that they would have

been more useful than injurious to society. It is remarkable that the King of Prussia, who welcomed them in his States, and the Republic of Venice, which had driven them out, and took them back only when forced to do so, did not follow the example of the Courts of Portugal, France, Madrid, and Naples. With regard to the House of Austria, I am not astonished that it keeps them; that House knows how important it is to preserve the name the Italian Jesuits gave it, — *La Santa Casa di Austria.*

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[NOTE — Here the Memoirs stop abruptly. The heading of the next chapter is given, "Plan of Finance proposed during the War," and that is all. They were probably interrupted by the cardinal's departure for Rome to attend the Conclave held after the death of Pope Clement XIII. in 1769. The manuscript is wholly in the handwriting of Mme. de Puy-Montbrun, and was not continued from this point.]

LETTERS

OF

THE ABBÉ COMTE DE BERNIS

TO

THE DUC DE CHOISEUL,

AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF VIENNA,

TO

THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR,

AND TO

THE KING, LOUIS XV.

LETTERS.

I.

To Monsieur le Comte de Stainville,[1] *Ambassador to the Court of Vienna.*

VERSAILLES, January 20, 1757.

I SUPPOSE you to be in Parma, my dear count, and I have begged M. de Rochechouart to give you this letter.

An attempt has been made to assassinate the king, and the Court has seen in this frightful event only a means of driving out our friend.[2] Various intrigues have been brought to bear on the confessor. There is a tribe at Court which always looks to extreme unction as a means of increasing its influence. Why should piety be so apart from virtue? Our friend can no longer scandalize any but fools and knaves. It is of public notoriety that for the last five years friendship has taken the place of gallantry. It is only hypocrisy that goes back into the past to blacken the innocence of the present relation. That relation is founded on the necessity he has to open his soul to a safe and tried friend, and one who, with the present divided ministry, is the sole point of union. Besides, why insist on coercing people's conscience? why make religion serve as a mask for intrigue, ambition, and the

[1] Louis XV. created the Comte de Stainville Duc de Choiseul, in August, 1758. The latter returned from his embassy to Rome in February 1757; went as ambassador to Vienna the following August; took Cardinal de Bernis' place as minister of Foreign Affairs in November, 1758; was dismissed and exiled in 1770.— TR.

[2] "Our friend" — *notre amie* — means in these letters Mme. de Pompadour.— TR.

spirit of vengeance? What ingratitude have I not seen, my dear count, and how corrupt our century has become! Perhaps there was never more virtue in the world, but there was certainly more Honour. You will find Madame Infanta [Duchess of Parma] very well inclined towards our friend; it is for you to fortify those sentiments. Her affairs, bound up with those of Vienna, depend on the retention of Mme. de Pompadour; the alliance with Vienna is tacitly opposed by every one.

I think it necessary that you should be sent to that Court. Little Broglie solicits the post, but it is to be feared that he would not succeed there, on account of the prejudices set up against him in that country. You have the ideas, good intentions, and necessary courage to prop a work it would be so advantageous to carry on and so dangerous to abandon. Therefore, come here promptly. You will find in the Council one friend the more, who knows your worth and finds pleasure in speaking of it. I embrace you, my dear count, with all my heart.

The king is well, and sees clearly all that has gone on and all that will still go on.

II.

August 1, 1757.

I have the honour, my dear count, to send you, herewith, your last instructions. It is with regret that I see you leave us [for his Embassy to Vienna], but it is for the good of the State and for yours. I forgot in your instructions to speak of the affair of Lucca, in which the Infanta is interested; with that exception, I think I have forgotten nothing. Maréchal d'Estrées has won a dull battle [Hastembeck], be it said between us; but it may have the results of a great victory if he knows how to take advantage of it. Madame

Nattier

Louise Elisabeth de France

"Madame Infanta"

Mau

Infanta leaves, as you know, on the 14th. Keep well, do our business, and do not be uneasy about the friends you leave here.

III.

September 10, 1757.

I am enchanted, my dear count, as your friend, and as friend of the mission with which you are charged. I hear that their Imperial Majesties, the ministers, and chiefly Count Kaunitz, are satisfied with your first steps. I even see that the latter is beginning to trust you. The confidence he has made to you in regard to the archduke does not surprise me. I thought there must be an engagement of some kind. The king does not wish the Infanta informed that this engagement has been contracted with their Sicilian Majesties. I shall merely tell Madame Infanta that you are charged with discovering the secret. After all, the two Neapolitan princesses are in poor health, and your star may work them harm. Try to find out if the second archduke is also engaged. We must keep ourselves revolving round that idea.[1]

M. de Staremberg [Austrian ambassador] had been informed of Count Kaunitz' revelation; I answered him (as you did) very simply. He seemed to me sorry that any measures had been taken in regard to it; but we could not then have divined where we should be to-day.

I imagine that you will inform M. de Soubise punctually of all the movements of the Austrian armies and their plan of operations. Therefore I think it superfluous to request you to do so.

[1] The eldest daughter of the Duchess of Parma, the Infanta Isabella-Marie-Louise-Antoinette, married the eldest son of the Emperor Francis I. and Maria Theresa, who became Emperor of Germany as Joseph II. at his father's death in 1765. — Tr.

The affair of parliament is settled, as you know. Those who look at this matter apart from all others think that the king does wrong to show such kindness; but for my part, I think I have done him, under the combined circumstances in which we are, a very important service. Paris is on a pinnacle of joy. The king is beloved there; and as for me, I have roused, by the benedictions bestowed upon me, the jealousy of my surrounders. But you know my courage and patience; I try to see right before acting, and then to look neither back nor to one side. The Infanta behaves very nicely to those whom we love; she conducts herself well and will not, to all appearances, let the grappling-irons be put upon her. I have no time to tell you more. Pay my court, I beg of you, to the Empress, and cultivate the esteem and friendship which her minister testifies for you. In addition to which, I recommend you one thing; *never be weary of having the desire to please.* As to all the rest, I shall follow your advice cheerfully. Rely eternally, my dear count, on my tender attachment to you.

IV.

PARIS, September 20, 1757.

M. de Richelieu, my dear count, has rather rushed the affair of the convention [of Kloster-Zeven]. Never was act so little reflected on, or contracted with less form. The Duke of Mecklenburg and the Swedes will not like it, and I fear that troubles may arise which will counterbalance the advantages. It is certain that the event is glorious in appearance, and that it gives M. de Richelieu the ability to advance; but, beware of results! M. de Duras will gather the fruits of this convention, which will make him undoubtedly first gentleman of the Bed-chamber. M. de Gesvres is dead.

Make Count Kaunitz talk to you about the Saxons. They want us to pay half the expense the Saxons have cost the Court of Vienna since the treaty of Versailles. That would not be just, though it has an appearance of justice. If we put all our money into paying foreigners none will be left for our own expenses. On the other hand, we are bound to do something for the Saxons. M. Boullongne will try to give them a million, but we cannot go beyond that. See about preparing this matter, and if you find it easy, bring it to an agreement which we can conclude here with M. de Fontenay.[1] We are anxious about M. de Soubise. Though he is prudent and all his connections are excellent, we are afraid that the desire to win a battle, or the fear of retreating may expose him to defeat. For my part, I rely on the dual star of the king and empress, on your star, and a little on mine. Adieu; I am worn out with fatigue, but I love you no less.

V.

FONTAINEBLEAU, September 24, 1757.

Mme. de Pompadour, my dear count, is very well; she was grieved for some time about the settlement with parliament; she admits to-day that her pride for the king was hurt. But little by little she will feel that the master's kindness strengthens and confirms his power and authority.

The English have attacked Rochefort. You can, without risking anything against truth, make Count Kaunitz and even the Empress feel that the second army we sent into Germany for her defence brought the visit of the English upon us; for they would never have risked attacking our coasts

[1] Gaspard de Fontenay, field-marshal of the armies of Saxony and envoy extraordinary from His Orthodox Majesty to the Court of Versailles from April, 1757, to 1770. — FR. ED.

if we had not stripped them of men. This is not a complaint, for we had to do it; the king will never regret the marks of friendship he has given to his "good friend, the empress," but it is necessary that they should know the extent and cost of the service. M. de Staremberg presses me hard to share the payment of what it has cost the empress to support the Saxon fugitives since the signature of our last treaty. It is true that we agreed to pay half the necessary subsidy for the keep of ten thousand Saxons; it is also true that the expenditure made by the Court of Vienna for the Saxons has been, so far, met by that Court alone; but, in truth, also, the expenditures that we are making for the empress are so far beyond our agreement that it would be just not to take advantage of an article which is obligatory only when we have both agreed on the quota of subsidy to be granted to Saxony. We do not refuse to arrange for the future on that agreement; but are we obliged to pay for the generosity the empress shows to the oppressed Saxons?

I warn you, moreover, that the state of our finances will not allow us to carry any higher the subsidy granted to Saxony, or we shall not be in a condition to pay for essentials. The hostilities of the English along our coasts, which add to our expenses, also the damages they have caused us at Rochefort, by burning our magazines and four ships of war that were there, do not make our means of finance the easier; whence I conclude that the Court of Vienna ought to enter into all these considerations as if it were one of our own family. It is not a question here of drawing the short bone, or of seeking to make all the points of a bargain profitable; we have acted with nobleness, and have spent millions beyond our promises and obligations; consequently, we ought to be spared all that is not absolutely agreed on or absolutely necessary. The empress is well fitted to respond

to the nobility of the king's proceedings. I beg of you to treat all this with friendliness; any other tone in such a matter would not be proper.

The king gives the *cordon-rouge* [Order of Saint-Louis] to M. de Montazet, and he wishes that their Imperial Majesties should announce his favour to him, as it is granted on their testimony.

M. de Soubise appears to be no longer in danger, but he is greatly embarrassed by the troops of the Cercles [the German allies]; each body must act apart, or, if mingled, they spoil everything.

M. de Richelieu's convention is very good in one sense; but it hampers us very much in another; yet, after all, what human work is without defects? The Swedes have begun operations, and the convention between the three Courts is probably signed by this time. I embrace you, my dear count, with all my heart.

The Bishop of Orléans is to be transferred to Condom, and they reserve for your brother a great see; this is what the Bishop of Digne, minister of benefices told me. Madame Infanta is writing to you. She is succeeding wonderfully.

VI.

FONTAINEBLEAU, September, 27, 1757.

I have this moment received, my dear count, your despatch of the 20th. I shall render account to the king to-morrow of the convention you have signed with the Duke of Brunswick. I think well of it; and it will serve as a rule for the other princes, with whom I deferred arranging until I heard from you. I do not doubt, although you have not said so, that you informed M. de Richelieu at once of this convention; for otherwise he would not fail to disarm all the auxiliary

troops of Hanover. It was not for me to give him the order or the counter-order. I have kept snug and tranquil.

We had no news yesterday of M. de Soubise, but his last letter was reassuring. We are uneasy, with good reason, at the landing of British troops on the island of Aix, and of what they may undertake from there on Rochefort. Maréchal de Senneterre and Lougeron are not very reassuring. We have taken, however, all possible precautions that the enemy may not instigate any rising in our Protestant provinces. All our troops are in the service of the empress; she ought to remember eternally the damage that our faithfulness and generosity may cause this kingdom. If the English burn Rochefort we shall lose two men-of-war, four frigates, and immense storehouses. This inflicted damage would give them courage and means to continue the war. But it will not change the basis of things.

I fear that M. de l'Hôpital has not understood the affairs of Poland better as a courtier than as minister. I shall soon be enlightened as to my fears in this respect. I know, too, that there is much to fear in the Russian projects on Courlande and Samogitia; and also in the intrigues of M. Bruhl. In other respects M. l'Hôpital gives us great hopes in regard to our commerce with Russia. We shall see. Russia costs us too dear not to desire it may be useful to us, on that point at least.

Mme. de Pompadour has had a very severe headache, but is rid of it this morning. M. Molé is chief-president [of parliament]. This choice is approved. On the other hand, the Archbishop of Paris has returned from exile and the other bishops are recalled. The king gives favours on both sides. Our friend almost sulked at me for two days on account of the settlement with parliament. But I make bold to say that without it all was lost. It is perhaps the greatest

service I shall have rendered in my life; but it must be looked at from the true point of view. Before the thing was done, everybody believed its success impossible; being done, they now say that nothing was more easy. I have long been corrected of putting vanity into what I do; I do not see myself in my services, and I only seek, thank God! for means to reach the end I set before me.

The Infanta is behaving marvellously well at Court; she treats our friend well without being thwarted or scolded by her relatives. M. de Staremberg will certainly write good things of her to the Empress. That minister sings your praises, and no one applauds him with better heart and firmer faith than I.

The Swedes have taken Anclam in Prussian Pomerania, says the news from Hamburg; so all goes well. Provided that M. de Soubise has time to be seconded by M. de Richelieu, the King of Prussia can hardly save himself from the scrape he is in.

Adieu, M. l'ambassadeur; be always sure of my attachment. I will reply to your despatches on my return to Versailles. I go to-morrow to Paris, and the king to Choisy.

VII.

VERSAILLES, October 3, 1757.

M. de Richelieu, my dear count, is rather embarrassed by a letter, full of praises, which the King of Prussia had written to him, proposing to make peace. The maréchal would not be sorry to do so, nor Denmark either. But I have broken the legs and arms of all these sham measures, and communicated the whole story to M. de Staremberg, who will give an account of it to his Court. Moreover, I have put in the Bastille a certain emissary of the Comte de Neuwied, the most in-

triguing of the counts of the Empire, whose correspondence with the King of Prussia was discovered in Vienna. Nothing was found among the papers of his emissary; but he told that a secretary of M. de Richelieu, whom he supposes to be in correspondence with a former Prussian minister now in Frankfort, had proposed to give Neufchâtel to our friend in order to attach her to the King of Prussia. All these intrigues were begun by the Sieur Fischer, who wrote a most imprudent letter to the Comte de Neuwied. The whole of this seems wretched stuff to me.

But what is not so is that M. de Soubise needs to be reinforced, though the King of Prussia has abandoned Erfurt; on the other hand M. de Richelieu is not secure enough in Halberstadt, with his big army, to establish his quarters there. Hence it comes about that the King of Prussia with a small army holds in check the army of Darius, and eats up our supplies under its nose. This is not glorious nor useful; but, my dear count, all the world do not wish as we do that our new alliance should last; or, at any rate, all the world wants to be master, and govern the affair generally, without knowing anything about the secret arrangements. M. de Richelieu must come here and arrange for the coming campaign, without which nothing will be attained.

The English, after destroying the little half-built fort on the island of Aix, have begun their retreat; the courier who brings us the news arrived this morning. Maréchal de Senneterre behaved much better than I could have believed. We shall see if the English attempt any further attack. This one will prove rather dear to them, being so shameful. I have sent M. de Richelieu your convention with Brunswick to serve as a precedent for all the others. The Hessians refused to be disarmed; and now that M. de Richelieu has marched in advance, the Duke of Cumberland harps upon that disarm-

ament, and M. de Lynar also. This is what it is not to clearly explain things in deeds and documents. The one you executed in Vienna is admirable; it leaves no tail behind it.

The archbishop has returned to Paris. He came to see me yesterday, and met here the new chief-president; they embraced cordially. Good God! it is the manner of doing things that is of consequence. If they would let me alone, I could end everything with a little patience. The Bishop of Digne seconds me well.

I have told Madame Infanta our idea about the second archduke (with the reserve that you desired). She approves it. Treat it as from yourself until the matter takes on a real consistency. Madame Infanta continues to behave well. She likes you; she never loses her affairs from sight, nor the persons who can be useful to her. That is a good deal for a royal personage. I am astonished not to have news of you this week. M. de Staremberg is in the same condition. You will not complain of the brevity of this letter — which proves to you that I have nothing to do; it will at least make you think that I like to talk with you. They say that Mme. de Stainville succeeds very well in Vienna. Assure her of my respects.

VIII.

VERSAILLES, October 8, 1757.

I have burned, my dear count, the private letter which the last courier from M. de Broglie brought. The detail it contained grieves me on account of the bad results which I foresee. There was a moment when I thought the war ended. If, on the one hand, M. de Soubise had been reinforced, and if, on the other, the Austrians had divided their forces, the King of Prussia would have been taken between two

fires. Instead of which, they lost a month of most precious time, and the King of Prussia has taken advantage of it. I wish, as you do, that a battle had preceded the siege that our allies were to make in Silesia. The superiority of the Austrian forces would naturally have assured them success in the field, and then we need not have feared the bad results of a siege they may be forced to raise.

It is impossible to distrust more than I distrust the relations of M. de Broglie with the Russians; but setting aside the prejudices and the private methods of that ambassador, there remain so many points on which he has reason that I hesitate to blame his opinion, though I regret certain consequences of it. Fortunately, I have at the Porte a man [M. de Vergennes] who follows to the letter the orders I convey to him, and that to me is great tranquillity. The retreat of M. Apraxin is an incomprehensible event. M. de l'Hôpital wrote me, September 16, that he saw no change of principles, and he even believed that M. Bestucheff supported and sincerely urged the advance of the Russian troops. A few more days will enlighten us.

Our convention with Sweden was signed September 23; we should have made a better bargain last year had we let the Muscovites stay at home and powerfully armed the Swedes. You ought now to bend all your forces in that direction (if it is true that M. Apraxin regains Courlande). *Our great affair can end only in that way.* I try to think, however, that nothing is irremediably spoiled.

M. de Richelieu is angry with me because I have tried to make his convention [at Kloster-Zeven] less imperfect, as if it were not more glorious for him to have his work good rather than bad. As for M. Ogier, I told him my opinion so firmly that he will never do the same thing again; and M. de Richelieu will henceforth be obliged, in

all that concerns statesmanship, to wait until I send him the orders of the king. He will sulk at me for a time; but I am so made that I look only at the good of things and shut my eyes to the rest.

Console the afflicted and give us good news of Silesia. Who will command this winter, in the absence of M. de Richelieu? Do you believe that the King of Prussia will make no attempt to force our quarters (unless we withdraw them to Brunswick)? In that case what will become of the country of Halberstadt? Will there be enough food there to feed us till spring? It cannot be doubted that the King of Prussia will devastate it; it is the peculiarity of this war to fear the enemy, with double his number of men; that is a great eulogy on the Prussian troops.

They say that M. de Beauvau will be captain of the Guards, and that Maréchal Thomond will command in Languedoc. Keep well, and count always on my attachment and friendship.

P. S. MM. Glaubitz and de Gribeauval are perfectly useless at Dantzig; they might not be so in Silesia.

IX.

October 9, 1757.

Madame la dauphine has just given birth happily and rapidly to a fourth prince, to whom the king has given the name of "Comte d'Artois." I have no time to reply to your despatch of the 2d of this month, which reached me last night. M. de Courten arrived at the same time. Nothing could be better than the plan you have sent for "a new agreement about the siege of Magdeburg and the maintenance of the Saxons." All these affairs pass through your hands, and I will prevent M. de Staremberg from becoming jealous or uneasy. Arrange all on that footing and prepare

both matters and means in advance. I will return your courier in three days; I need that time to discuss and make things understood here. I will tell you in confidence that they are going to send Crémille to Richelieu's armies, and de Soubise to establish winter-quarters, and many other arrangements for which we have need of a man who sees clearly, who removes difficulties and knows how to answer them. I confide to you at the same time that the king's intention is that M. de Richelieu shall stay with his army this winter to prevent the hurly-burly there would be if the King of Prussia should attack our quarters.

You have not understood M. d'Haverincourt if you think the Swedes wish to march to Berlin without being assured of our help and concurrence; both will be well placed if possible. We have left M. de Richelieu master of providing for this, only making him aware of the consequences, but without giving him a positive order in a matter so delicate and one which it is impossible to arrange by the card.

M. de Courten plumes himself on the welcome given to him in Vienna; he was well received here. As for you, my dear count, it tranquillizes me infinitely to have you where you are; be always patient and master of yourself; all will go well since the English have spent thirty millions not to burn Rochefort! In regard to the negotiations with Hesse and Saxe-Gotha, I have sent them to M. de Richelieu, giving him as model the capitulation of Brunswick, which, as you know, was very well made. Adieu, my dear count; I am so hurried that I scarcely know what I write; but I know that I love you with all my heart. Say many things for me to Count Kaunitz; I rely upon his friendship — or rather I aim for it and desire it extremely.

X.

October 17, 1757.

I have not the time, my dear count, to write you a letter to-day. In the first place, I am sulky because you no longer write to me except in official style, and secondly, I am in haste to send off the courier. We have just got M. Berryer and M. Gilbert in the Council to duly enlighten us as to proper forms. As for me, I think that the best method to settle the affairs of clergy and parliament is to get rid of precedents and forms. These affairs never end except by ceasing to deal with them. The bigotry of M. Kaunitz ought not to surprise you. He has always had a great deal of circumspection for England; but the moment one sees that sort of thing it is no longer dangerous. I embrace you with all my heart.

XI.

Versailles, October 24.

Do not be troubled, my dear count, about your brother. I confide to you under the seal of secrecy that the Bishop of Digne intends to give him the bishopric of Laon on the death of Cardinal de Tavannes, which cannot be far off. He also intends to propose M. de Rochechouart for Rouen. With regard to Orléans, the Bishop of Digne has excellent reasons for not proposing your brother to fill it. Do not see things in black, my dear count, in matters concerning your welfare. You have on your side birth, merit, services, and sincere friends.

M. Kaunitz has communicated to me the memorial of the Hanoverian minister through M. de Staremberg. Do not be surprised at this method; it is common in all Courts. I can assure you that up to the present moment we have had no reason to distrust his good faith; we may be on our guard

against certain political principles (the remains of old prejudices) but in combating them, or in setting them aside with gentleness and discretion, we can easily get the better of them.

I see the campaign finishing fruitlessly; our troops are worn-out, without rations, without shoes, without tents, and the season now rendering war impossible. The great point to-day (after the military faults that both sides have respectively committed) is to preserve the armies till the spring, without which the vanquished will give the law to the victor. M. de Richelieu is now about to receive it from the Landgrave of Hesse, seconded by Denmark. The auxiliaries of Hanover threaten to break the capitulation of Kloster-Zeven if we persist in disarming the Hanoverians; and M. de Richelieu, in place of an army assembled round Stade, has left only six battalions able to get together; so that, after due reflection, and for fear he may let our rear be cut off, the king has permitted his general to get out of this position as best he can and with as little shame as possible.

You can well believe that I suffer martyrdom in the depths of my soul; but what is to be done when a general sends word that he is alarmed at the consequences which the rupture of the capitulation may have? I have done what depended on me, that is, I have not permitted the army of the Duke of Cumberland to retire into Holstein, which M. de Richelieu, who is not a good statesman, was much inclined to. As for the rest, he made verbally to the envoy of the King of Prussia the answer I had dictated to him.

I am ignorant of what is going on in Silesia; but I am uneasy about it. The war would have been finished now if they had driven the King of Prussia from Saxony in this campaign. God grant that the two Courts may not repent for the faults of their generals. I am beginning to make

Denmark see that it does not suit us to have her meddle so much in our affairs. I am also taking measures to inform the Empress of Russia of what is happening, and also to strengthen Sweden; but the Court of Vienna must come to our aid, and, instead of seeking to make good bargains, she must feel that there is but one that is good, namely: to bring down promptly a formidable enemy, and not give him time to recover an existence in Europe.

The Sultan of Turkey is ill, and that may prove another great event. All is for us now, if we act promptly; all is against us if matters drag on.

I send you a letter from Madame Infanta, which I opened, thinking it was addressed to me. I shall use the expedient you suggested to me in regard to the Infanta Isabella.

XII.

November 1, 1757.

If care is not taken, my dear count, our great engine will go astray.[1] M. de Richelieu is badly advised. They warned me that Maillebois was leading him by the nose, and that the said Maillebois did not wish the King of Prussia to cease to be our ally.[2] The convention of Halberstadt is a gross political blunder which a child ought not to have made. The rumour is that we have already signed an armistice with the King of Prussia. It needs the patience of an angel not to fly into a fury.

[1] *Notre grande machine se detraquera.* If translated literally, critics would say it was an anachronism.— Tr.

[2] A few months later the Comte de Maillebois (son-in-law of the late Marquis d'Argenson) was accused of having betrayed the king by giving at the battle of Hastembeck, where he was quarter-master general to the army of Maréchal d'Estrées, an order not to pursue the Hanoverians. He tried to justify himself, was convicted of falsehood by Maréchal d'Estrées, deprived of all his offices, and imprisoned in the citadel of Doullens until 1776, according to some, or 1784, according to others.— Fr. Ed.

M. de Munckhausen has started for Stade. I shall not be astonished if the whole of M. de Richelieu's fine convention goes up in smoke. The Danes are already preparing quarters for the Hessians. The dragoons and hussars have reached Rheinsfeld on the Rhine. Nothing could be more urgent for us than to have these Hessian troops, but we cannot pay everything at once; it is with the greatest difficulty that we can provide the stipulated subsidy in behalf of the Court of Vienna. We have now sixty thousand more men (of our own and our auxiliaries) than we pledged ourselves for. If we were sharp in this affair and did not look upon the Court of Vienna and ourselves as children of the same family defending the same suit, all would be lost, with the finest game in the world in our hands. If I were master, I would make no more compliments, but send orders and recall immediately those who transgressed them.

M. de Broglie is playing the despot in Warsaw, as he does and will do everywhere. I have written to him so clearly that if he does not choose to listen to me he will have to return and politicize at the Tuileries. Worst of all, the want of discipline in our troops, the sordid avarice of our generals, and their insatiable greed are turning the whole Empire against us. They respect no forms in the imperial towns, men are dying of famine through the accumulation of their thefts; we are dishonouring the French name. I assure you that my heart is wrung with shame and the bitterest grief.

The news from Holland says that M. Yorke has received information by courier that the Empress of Russia has had a stroke of apoplexy and that they cannot draw a drop of blood from her. I hope the story may be false; but Russia, besides her bad government and the corruption of her ministers, is going to become furiously embarrassing if she demands any gains of territory. The Court of Vienna did

not perceive how heavy in the end would be the fault of leaving her such hopes, which are now converted into formal agreements. The desire of going straight to its end has masked and disguised many things from the Court of Vienna — but we must not reproach each other respectively for our blunders, we must repair them.

M. de Richelieu is returning here. On one side, this is a good, for we could not put up any longer with his dissertations. Always rash undertakings little reflected upon, then complaints and justifications. On the other side, the Archbishop of Paris is threatening us with his iron rod, and parliament, as inflexible as himself, is making us tremble lest cases turn up. A system of management is very difficult to carry out when no one is feared and every one has about the same power; that is our situation, and it will not change. I try to do the best I can, but I assure you, my dear count, that it requires a great fund of patience and courage.

I have not found M. de Broglie's courier at hand; therefore I send you his despatches which you will please send to him by courier.

XIII.

VERSAILLES, November 8, 1757.

I am delighted with you, dear count, and very glad that you have reason to be satisfied with the good faith and nobleness which the empress and Count Kaunitz have shown in the arrangement you have just made with them, and to which I hope you will soon be able to give the last touches of consistency and solidity. I have felt all the merits and all the consequences of this operation, and you may feel assured that I have made its value understood with the truest zeal and the sincerest satisfaction.

M. de Soubise has received orders to cross the Sala whenever he sees the chance of doing some glorious deed (for I do not think he can do a useful one, not being in a condition to lay a siege, and the measures you have taken to supply him with flour, oats, and artillery taking more time to be effective than people think). Consequently, it is very doubtful if M. de Soubise is in a condition to besiege either Torgau or Dresden during this campaign; I even venture to say that the contrary is almost certain. But I am none the less sorry, between ourselves, that they have not sent him orders more conditional, and more dependent on possible circumstances which cannot be foreseen at such a distance.

This retreat of M. de Soubise, joined to rumours of a convention of neutrality for Halberstadt, which the King of Prussia has caused to be spread all over Europe as a regular treaty with France, has caused so much talk and suspicion that the Swedes and Saxons are in the utmost alarm, and our enemies hidden among them laugh to heaven. This is what it is to have forgotten, being commander-in-chief of an army, the principles that the said general once had as an ambassador. The mediation of Denmark in the capitulation of September 8, brought upon us propositions from that Court in regard to mediation for peace with England; that is how they climb ladders! But I have, thank God! set aside that proposal (in a manner not to displease, and yet to allow no return to it) by confiding to Denmark that Spain offered her good services for the same purpose a year ago. Denmark was beginning to find fault with us for injurious suspicions. The treaty of subsidies with Hesse and Brunswick will remedy all that, and whatever desire I had to let those negotiations pass through your hands, I thought I ought not to further irritate M. de Richelieu, who has never understood me, or has pretended

The Duc de Richelieu.

Main

not to understand me in whatever relates to politics. He was even a little jealous of your negotiation with Brunswick.

The interests of peace determine me the more easily in his favour, because otherwise we shall never get it; M. de Richelieu would not be satisfied with the terms of any agreement he did not make. He must have seen everywhere, and in everything the formal intention to disapprove of his work of September 8. Of two evils, I have tried to avoid the worst.

Ah! my dear count, what vile things money makes men do! M. de Richelieu has seen an emissary of the King of Prussia who is implicated in the affair of the Comte de Neuwied; he did not have him arrested, although the man came to his army under a false passport. Such things give ground for suspicion, false, I believe, but seeming probable; one would have to write volumes to disprove such chimeras. M. de Richelieu has found the man who was thought to be his secretary, and who proposed the principality of Neufchâtel for Mme. de Pompadour. We have written him to send the man here to the Bastille.

No one could have acted with more sincerity and good faith than I have done with M. de Richelieu, yet I read on Mme. de Laureguais' countenance that he is not satisfied with me. But I cannot sacrifice to civil compliances the more important interests of the State.

Madame la dauphine is in tears, at no longer having the hope of seeing her country [Saxony] delivered this winter. The Swedes dread lest they be crushed between both sides; so formidable is an active and skilful enemy, even though he is himself in trouble. As for Russia, one cannot doubt that she is guided by knaves; and if, instead of giving money, — which is a shameful means invented by England, and secures nothing because it corrupts the Court to which

it is paid, — the Empress Maria Theresa had determined to destroy M. Bestucheff (who formerly served her well, and whom she may perhaps want to recover in future), she could have done so by arranging with the king a letter that each should write with his and her own hand to the Empress of Russia, who thinks rightly, but is weak, and a creature of habit. In this way the suspected minister could be got rid of, or be so restrained that he would not dare, for a long time at least, to betray his duty. If they do not take this course, no other is open to them but to content themselves with feeble concurrence, and be satisfied that Russia will not be against us. There would be much danger in abandoning her altogether to the corruption of her ministers and generals.

I have dropped the word; and so has Madame Infanta, to M. de Staremberg about the Infant Don Louis. The occasion came about naturally. He did not seem to pay much attention to it; but I warn you that the Queen of Spain is not well, and that the King of Spain seems a little tired of the rôle they are making him play. This is a secret I confide to you alone. I will tell you more when I am more convinced of the truth of these first appearances.

Be as content with me as I am with you and I shall have nothing to desire.

XIV.

VERSAILLES, November 14, 1757.[1]

Conceive, my dear count, of the state in which we are. It is three times twenty-four hours since we heard that M. de

[1] This letter relates to the battle of Rosbach, which M. de Soubise fought at M. de Stainville's (Choiseul's) exhortation, given at the instigation of Mme. de Pompadour; see Chapter X., Part II., pages 29, 30, of present volume. This fact incidentally shows how M. de Choiseul and Mme. de Pompadour were deceiving M. de Bernis and acting behind his back even at this early date. — TR.

Soubise attacked, on the 5th, the army of the King of Prussia, that he was repulsed from beginning to end, with the loss of many officers; but farther than that we have no details.

You can judge of the situation of the Court, and the fury of Paris. M. de Soubise did not wish to fight; he held a council of war, and the general opinion carried the day. The troops of our German allies [les Cercles] fled, they say, and ours, so subject to panic terror, would not fight. M. de Richelieu behaved like a man of courage and head; he marched to meet our army, and seems to have foreseen and prevented all that the King of Prussia might have done against him.

Thus, we can do nothing now but wait events; but our friend is much to be pitied. The public would have forgiven M. de Soubise only in case of a victory; the public is unjust, but that is how it is. You know what they said of Mme. de Maintenon, when she insisted on her defeated friends being allowed to get their revenge.

I think there are serious reflections to make on all this, and that M. de Soubise, who behaved like the most prudent of men before this unhappy moment, and like a hero during the battle, ought to crown those virtues by consenting with a good grace to command the reserve of the main army. I think this as a minister and as a friend; one must not be angry with the public, nor prove one's power or the warmth of one's friendship by a constancy which does not work for the good of affairs or for that of one's friend. What I have suggested will avoid for M. de Soubise the mortifications of public dislike, and the universal opposition and disapproval that must otherwise follow. I shall speak to our friend in this tone; and if I were within reach of giving M. de Soubise advice, this is what I should give him. You will readily understand that he is not suspected. Besides which, the two generals can never be made to harmonize. This is enough

for to-day; love me still. They are not discouraged here; I hope it may be the same where you are.

I warn you that M. de Richelieu complains of receiving no answer to a very civil letter which he wrote to M. Kaunitz; I think you had better tell that minister this for the good of his cause.

XV.

November 22, 1757.

We were beaten, my dear count, 1st, because M. Revel [taken prisoner and dead of his wounds] made bad arrangements for the march; 2d, because in defiling along the base of a slope we had not previously made ourselves masters of the heights; 3d, because we formed a bow in marching on the King of Prussia, while he made the string of the bow; 4th, because we were attacked before we could form in line of battle; 5th, because for three days our troops had scarcely had bread to eat; 6th, because our infantry did not fire a musket; 7th, because the King of Prussia had all the opposite advantages, to which he added those of ground, judicious disposition of his troops, strategy, and speed. Except the cavalry, none of our troops fought; they all fled, and the night saved them.

Two hours after midnight a halt was made to hold a council, at which opinions were divided. This prelude announces the loss of the battle; but I beg you to tell me what would have happened had we won it? Also, how could we win a complete victory by beginning the battle at five in the afternoon of a November day? We might have gained the battle-field, but that is all. As we had no stores before us to go to, and no artillery for sieges, we must have returned upon our steps to go into winter-quarters at a great distance, inasmuch as M. de Richelieu had not been willing to occupy in force

either Halberstadt or Berneburg. An advance would have been dangerous and very useless — for wars are not to be fought for the newspapers, but for history.

M. de Soubise is, as you can well believe, torn in pieces by the public, who never approved of his commanding an army, and who have prophesied his defeat for the last two months. However, as everything passes off here, the fury is beginning to subside. They cannot continue M. de Soubise at the head of a beaten army, first, because that army does not exist until it is remade; second, because of the public clamour, which counts for something when money is needed and they cannot get it except though public confidence.

The fruits of the battle of Hochstedt were lost because of the rivalry between Maréchal de Villars and the Elector of Bavaria, and all the evils of the present campaign are the result of this vice of jealousy innate in the hearts of men; even when they are sixty years old. Moreover, if we do not take care and gather ourselves together, we shall be driven out of Germany; between our forces and France there is an army which they have only put to sleep and would not take time to destroy when they could have done so. It is inconceivable that, in spite of all representations, they quitted Stade to go and spend a month at Halberstadt, which they now want to abandon! We shall see what comes of this episode of the Hanoverians; meantime, what will the army do in the spring? It has already eaten up the country it occupies, and the region it is to occupy will be eaten up; if the discipline of the army is not restored, all is lost.

And all is still more lost, if generals are allowed to act out of their own heads, and to argue perpetually against the Court. We must have a government; and there is none now any more than there was in the past. At the present moment

it is feared that I may become prime-minister. This fine idea confines me more within my own limits; I keep to jeremiads, to which they are long accustomed and which have ceased to produce effect; even disasters do not afflict or correct. That is the state of things. Sensitive, and (if I may dare to say so) sensible as I am, I am dying on the rack, and my martyrdom is useless to the State.

Men have tried, from the first moment, to destroy the work of the alliance, which, in the month of September, was going well of itself; its policy had stirred Europe, and it would have succeeded were it not for our blunders and brigandage. When I say blunders I mean also those of our allies; for the diversion of the war into Silesia was the principle of the evil, and the origin of the fatal points we have lost. We were forced to go rapidly where the Austrian army would not go at all. All was precipitate; nothing was done in concert or by regulation from that moment. You are more fortunate in your negotiations. Do not fail to consult Spain, for there are some symptoms of better things in that country; but beware lest our reverses should chill these beginnings of inclination, about which it is not yet time to say much.

M. de Staremberg received his despatches to-day, but has not yet communicated to me their contents. M. de Richelieu feels that he is suspected in Vienna, and he accuses M. de Staremberg of being the cause of it, which is false. Why seek so far for causes? The convention of Halberstadt, and the division of his army at the moment when M. de Soubise marched, are the real grounds for suspicion and complaints. But where are we to turn to get another general? Maréchal de Belleisle will not serve, nor could he stand it three months. All this is very grievous, and very difficult both to ward off and repair. I comfort myself

in speaking to you with confidence; but I do not see that I do you harm by it.

Nothing is considered at Court as to this lost battle but *M. de Soubise*, and not the State. Our friend has given him the strongest proofs of friendship, and so has the king; she has also given proofs of her reason and moderation, and I of my sincerity, — by saying what I think, and by writing it to M. de Soubise. I have too good an opinion of him to fear that he will quarrel with me for my frankness; with another man anger would be infallible; but the fear of that would not stop me. *He who has but a moment more to live has nothing more to conceal.* A thousand times it has crossed my mind to leave in the lurch a battle-field where they all fight so ill; but honour and gratitude make it a law with me to die there, first or last, as fate ordains. Be sure that my head is clear; but it is very useless to me, because there are no longer ministers or ministry. It is not worse nor better than before your departure, except that we live on good terms with one another and have about an equal influence.

Adieu, my dear count; I love and esteem you much.

XVI.

November 29, 1757.

It is ten days since we have received news of M. de Richelieu, my dear count; we are awaiting with impatience to learn the result of his arrangements to bring the Hanoverians to their duty. We are still ignorant whether the Brunswickers have dispersed, as their master promised. This whole affair is a tissue of bad faith on one side, and dupery, obstinacy, and bad conduct on the other. If the military business is not remedied, the political business will be ruined from top to bottom. The bitterness of the public

against M. de Soubise still goes on; they cannot accustom themselves to the shame of that battle; and the grumblers and enemies of the Court have too fine a canvas not to delight in embroidering it.

They send me word from Hamburg that the King of Prussia has collected a large number of boats to transport a corps of troops across the Elbe to Stade under the orders of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. This arrangement chimes in with that of the Hanoverians and their allies. The Prince of Hesse has not yet chosen to reply to M. de Richelieu's letters and summons.

With regard to Denmark, you will see by my despatches where we are. Though the Court of Vienna, and especially M. Kaunitz, who has interests there, are reluctant to cede East Friesland, we must not dismiss that idea too soon, as it flatters the Grand-duke of Russia, and gives Denmark the hope of an approaching agreement on the exchange of Holstein; besides which, there may come some means of arranging the matter. Count Kaunitz thinks too nobly not to sacrifice something of his own interests to the general affair; he will understand the importance of taking from the Protestants a leader and protector, of avoiding a dangerous mediation, and of bringing Denmark gradually into the common system; which will infallibly happen if, by working in good faith for the exchange of Holstein, the Court of Vienna does not begin by refusing point-blank what may leave Denmark a well-founded hope of obtaining it.

This negotiation would have the further advantage of binding the Grand-duke of Russia to us. For that, however, he must be tempted with something real. In a word, I have not concealed from Denmark the difficulties in relation to East Friesland, whether because it is an imperial fief on which several families have rights, or because it is

a pledge in the hands of the empress for damages against the infractor of the peace (Saxony ought to think the same in respect to this), or because, finally, Holland might regard with jealousy the possession of East Friesland by a prince who will one day be Emperor of Russia. Thus Denmark can only be grateful to us for not rejecting the matter altogether in view of such difficulties to surmount; but we should not, I think, be acting in good faith if we did not promise to give all our efforts to it.

For the rest, you will be satisfied, I believe, with the adroitness I have used in making the Court of Denmark explain itself on the dismemberment of the King of Prussia. I have gained by this means a pledge of its fidelity, and a resource for restraining it if M. de Bernstorf does not walk straight in future. I shall not be the less attentive to cast light upon his proceedings, because there is certainly some squint in the preparations that Denmark is making, and the new taxes it is imposing on its people without any visible necessity. Do not communicate M. de Bernstorf's memorial. I send it only for your own guidance. I have already made M. de Staremberg see how necessary it is that he should lend himself to Denmark's views, so as not only not to frighten or rebuff it, but to persuade it of the sincerity with which we will work for its advantage if it will sincerely concur in ours. I am not anxious about the skill that you will use on your side in the preliminaries of this affair, on which I will write you more amply in a few days.

The battle of the 5th [Rosbach] and the movements of the Hanoverians have alarmed the Duke of Mecklenburg; but M. de Champeaux does not despair of succeeding in his negotiation. I have sent him some arguments to strengthen his representations. The Duke of Mecklenburg complains of the cold replies of the Court of Vienna. It would be

very maladroit to let a negotiation of this importance fail through some pedantry of the Aulic Council, or from jealousy of seeing the Protestant princes uniting themselves more closely with France. It would not be pardonable under the circumstances. I am satisfied, in this respect, with the way of thinking of M. de Staremberg.

The squadron of M. Dubois de la Motte [vice admiral] has returned to Brest from Louisbourg, and parliament has this day enregistered with a good grace, without restrictions and without remonstrances, an edict creating annuities amounting to a capital of forty millions. Where should we be to-day if I had not brought about the return of parliament to its functions? One must put the key under the door. I say the same, if they will not decide promptly to stop the brigandage and insubordination in the army, and *the lack of concert between the general and the Court.* In such circumstances the knot must be cut; or else we must warn our allies to make peace; all middle ways will only lead to destruction and shame. I do not spare the truth; I am all day long at the cannon's mouth, whether it be the military, or for our internal affairs of clergy and parliament. If we can get the better of the archbishop all will be pacificated; but if they fear to force him to terms, parliament will begin again more vehemently than ever.

I will soon send you a memorial about the Swedes. I strongly desire, my dear count, that after the retirement of M. de Soubise Prince Charles should besiege in due form the camp of M. de Bevern, and endeavour to drive him out of it. As for us, we cannot go to the Elbe until we are obeyed by the general of our army, and until he has finished with the Hanoverians. If M. de Bevern were beaten he would have no resource in his retreat; it would be a fine stroke in a fine game, if well played.

The Court of Rome would like to enter into a negotiation with the new ambassador of Venice. For my part, I have advised that this be refused until the Senate has consented to the suspension; without that consent it is neither safe nor dignified. I beg you to hold the same language.

With regard to the marriage of the Infanta Isabella, the duchy of Clèves is a very small thing; it is putting the archduke on charity from the Court of Vienna, and his wife on the charity of France; and such burdens are always very weighty and vexatious. I leave aside the political considerations. On the other hand, will nothing be said to Spain on this family affair? It seems uncivil and dangerous not to do so; if Spain is spoken to I agree that it would be necessary to tell her the secret of the Court of Naples, and to expose the bickerings on both sides. See about this, discuss, arrange it. I send you a letter from M. de Staremberg to Count Kaunitz. Mme. de Pompadour is fairly well, and so am I. I embrace you with all my heart.

The Comte de Mailly has just arrived; he has permission from the King of Prussia to stay two months in Paris. Prince Henry of Prussia charged him, but in a general way, to try to diminish the bitterness of feeling and so bring matters to a happy conciliation. You can believe that the King of Prussia will not fail to spread a rumour that M. de Mailly has come to negotiate a private peace. We are honest men; no reproaches can ever be cast upon us in the article of good faith. I do not know if my letter will be legible, or intelligible; I have no time to read it over, still less to correct it.

I send you a letter from the king in reply to that of the empress. The affair of Schweidnitz has restored the heart to the breasts of the Paris public. If Prince Charles can get an advantage over M. de Bevern by driving him from his

camp, the operation on the Elbe will be made the safer. I have just received your despatch.

I beg you to obtain information, in the most secret manner possible, as to whether the Court of Vienna has, or has not, made proposals to M. de Saint-Germain to draw him into its service. We have some reason to feel uneasy as to this.

XVII.

December 7, 1757.

We learned yesterday, my dear count, of the surrender of Breslau, and the taking of M. de Bevern. I do not think that this general, who could not have had news from his master after the loss of the battle of Breslau, November 22, would have dared to let himself be captured with a view to negotiating; in any case, you have good eyes, and you will be able to clear this up.

Your last letter to Mme. de Pompadour has had no ill effects. She spoke of it to me; and as she continues to have the hope and the idea that M. de Soubise will still command the army, she is no longer so troubled. MM. de Mailly and de Castries are here on parole, the latter with three sabre-cuts on his head; they both say a thousand good things of their general, but with more zeal than wisdom; one should serve one's friends, but not in a way to injure them, and one cannot play the cringing courtier without displeasing the public. As for me, since the entrance of Maréchal Keith into Bohemia, and the neighbourhood of the troops of M. de Soubise to the frontiers of that kingdom, I shall propose to send M. de Soubise there with some twenty battalions (to be absolutely at the orders of the Court of Vienna), either to defend Bohemia, or go to Saxony, or to swell the army in Silesia, or wherever the King of Prussia may have twenty thousand men. The Court of

Vienna will be grateful to us for profiting by the circumstances in which we are to be of some use to them; at least, they cannot accuse us of being of no good to them, at a time when we might have seized Saxony from the King of Prussia — if M. de Richelieu's bad negotiations had not left enemies behind us.

But the strongest of my reasons for proposing this plan is that by it we get rid of the stone of stumbling between M. de Richelieu and M. de Soubise, who will never agree, and from this disunion there must infallibly result only ill-success and want of concert in all our projects. M. de Soubise will be satisfied; our friend also; and the public will not think it wrong that, Bohemia being attacked, and all the Austrian forces being in Silesia, we should send the twenty-four thousand men stipulated for by the Treaty of Vienna, under the orders of a general who ought always to have commanded them. But in order that this project should be approved on both sides, and that it be made really useful, no time must be lost. To-night I shall propose it but do not speak of it as yet.

The Swedes, so Baron Scheffer [their ambassador] tells me, cannot increase their army with national troops beyond six or seven thousand men; they do not wish to strip their country, and they are right. Thus we are left a margin, either for Saxons, Bavarians, or the Mecklenburg troops. This will not be clear to you without the explanation in my despatch.

M. de Soubise took the truthful letter that I wrote him very well. I do not show your letters to the king unless they are such as would please him, nor to Mme. de Pompadour unless there is nothing in them that would make her uneasy; nor to the Infanta if they contain anything that relates to her. Therefore do not be anxious about them, my

dear count. Every one is joyful over Breslau, but troubled about M. de Richelieu, whose fate we are awaiting. I embrace you with all my heart.

XVIII.

VERSAILLES, December 13, 1757.

You will not have a despatch from me to-day, my dear count. I have your courier to send back, but I profit by the one I am sending to M. de Broglie, who is a Polish officer, and will tell you a word about your last expedition.

The treaty with the Duke of Mecklenburg was signed on the 1st of this month; M. de Richelieu has been informed of it; it delivers up to him the fortress of Dömitz and the adjacent country. He seems to have known of the advantage of this occupation for some time; but it has not prevented him, on the rumour of a pretended attack on M. d'Armentières by two large Prussian corps from Magdeburg and Sala (which have no existence), to retrograde to Zell, after leaving six hundred men to reinforce the two battalions in Harburg, all of whom will of course be prisoners of war. Prince Ferdinand marched upon him, but he dared not wait for him; this is the fact. This retreat looks a good deal like a flight; he left two hundred sick and wounded at Lunenburg, and quantities of stores. M. de Caraman alone sustained the honour of this flight into Egypt; he fought, with a squadron of dragoons and two hundred *fischers*, a large body of Hanoverian cavalry, killed M. de Schoulemburg, and captured another commander and a hundred and fifty prisoners.

M. de Richelieu has collected his whole army in Zell. He declares that when he gets tents he will make war. God grant it! Meantime, may his retreat and our con-

vention with the Duke of Mecklenburg not expose that prince to be devastated, and driven from his States by either Prussians or Hanoverians. A fine reward that would be for having made sacrifices to France! Men do not die of sorrow, inasmuch as I am not dead since the 8th of September. The blunders committed then, and since then, have been heaped up until it is almost impossible to explain them except by bad intentions. I have spoken with the greatest force to *God and his saints.* I excite a momentary rise of pulse; then the lethargy returns; great, sad eyes are opened wide, and — that is all.

If I could avoid the dishonour there would be in deserting on the battle-field, I would flee to my abbey; I feel that I do not cling to my office; but I also feel that I cling to my reputation, and that it is cruel to dishonour one's self, without being able otherwise to escape it. The haughty air of the country in which you are will, more and more change to contempt unless some change of maxims is made here. The great misfortune is the men who conduct affairs — *we have neither generals nor ministers.* I think that last sentence so true and just that I am willing to be included in the category if people choose. I succeeded in making the treaty with Mecklenburg after the battle of Rosbach and the declaration against us of the Hanoverians. That act might deserve some consideration, but it has passed unfelt; I seem to be minister of Foreign Affairs in limbo.

Try, my dear count, if you cannot succeed better than I have done in rousing the spirit of life which is being extinguished here. As for me, I have dealt all my great blows, and I am now going to do like others and have a *paralysis of feeling;* — but without ceasing to do my duty as a good citizen and an honest man.

The plan of sending M. de Soubise into Bohemia could

not be carried out; we have need to assemble all our forces. M. de Soubise is to take into Hesse the troops he had on the Main. Do you want me to tell you the secret spring of all this? "*Les Ormes*" leads the army from afar, also the War department.[1] I see that as plain as day, but I cannot get others to see it.

I think, my dear count, that I am returning you confidence for confidence, and that you will be content with the entire trust I place in you. *The word "peace" which has been uttered to you* does not alarm me. They cannot make peace without us, and if we only say the word they will find themselves over the precipice. But I own that we should then no longer be masters of playing the rôle that suits us. I have written to Folard [envoy to Bavaria and the *cercle* of Franconia] to restrain him. I inclose, for you alone, an extract from one of his letters.

God be willing soon to send us a will of some sort, or some one who would have a will for us. I will be his *valet de chambre* if he pleases, with all my heart.

XIX.

December 18.

No event of the war, my dear count, has made the impression upon me that this has [defeat of the Austrians at Lissa, otherwise called Leuthen]. With due respect to Prince Charles, he is too prodigal of battles; one cannot risk the fate of a monarchy every ten days with certainty of success. I do not know, however, whether he could have

[1] "Les Ormes" was the estate of Comte d'Argenson, late minister of war, to which he was exiled. He left in his place, by the system called "survivance in office," his nephew, the Marquis de Paulmy, the only son of the Marquis d'Argenson. The latter, and the clerks in the office, were supposed to be under the influence of the exiled count at "Les Ormes." — TR.

avoided it. If he could he ought to have done so; because good combinations become exhausted as well as bad ones.

Do you know what alarms me? It is not this new check, it is the position of the army of M. de Richelieu, which has no firm base anywhere. I fully expect that, the day after the late battle, the King of Prussia will be found to have sent a detachment to fall upon M. de Richelieu's centre; for he wants to send us back across the Rhine after this winter, and I think he will succeed in doing so. We are expecting a battle on our side; if we lose it we shall have to take leave of the company; if we win it we gain nothing. The enemies will retire to Stade, or cross the Elbe and join the King of Prussia, or go and crush the Swedes by Mecklenburg. The King of Prussia ought to risk all to recover Breslau and Schweidnitz. Prince Charles ought to attempt all that will not commit the fate of that country, and perhaps the fate of the whole war to the chances of a general battle.

But that done — what remains to do? It will be, so far as we are concerned, to conduct ourselves better, to have generals, to know how to make war. Tell me, on your conscience, if we can hope for those advantages. Besides, what course are we to take in the uncertainty in which we are kept as to the actual state of our army and that of the imperial army? Ask Count Kaunitz to develop his favourite plan for the neutrality of Hanover. I do not understand where he wants our army placed other than as it is to reach the Elbe. It must have a base somewhere before advancing again; it must have forts, stores, and communications with France in its rear. I own that besides ulterior difficulties, I do not see the possibility of his project at the present moment. But I am not obstinate, and I will yield the moment I can see clearly.

What a shaking this last check will give to the Empire,

the Protestants, to Holland, and perhaps, to the Court of Turin. My dear count, there is much to reflect upon. I am incapable of weak actions, still more of bad ones, but when we risk all we must at least have some means of not losing everything; we cannot make war without generals, nor with undisciplined troops. Put that distinctly into a corner of your head. We will never separate from our allies; that is a certain fact; but let us take care that we be not both ruined. If I could but see a leader to our army, and military conduct on both sides, I swear to you I could go to sleep after a battle won or lost. If I did not make these reflections I should be a madman, foolhardy, and little worthy of the office I hold.

The king, though sorry, is not in a state of consternation. He has not said a word that did not show his will to be firm and decided. That is a great point, but it is not all. *One must know how to do that which one wants done;* without which, we must, in concert, seek a wise course, hoping that generals may come to us on both sides.

Meantime I am harassed by uncertainty as to the state of our friends. The Prince de Lobkowitz has arrived [sent by the empress to bring word of the Imperial victory at Breslau]. He will be received as he should be; but he has come just after the bad news. Nothing could be more vexatious, or more singular. Take notice that the defeat was on the 5th. That date is very fatal. I open my heart to you, my dear count, because you have both soul and intellect.

XX.

December 22, 1757.

I agree with you, my dear count, that if our military plans continue to be at loose ends as they are, the enemy will ruin our system of alliance by his mere talent only. Who

conducts our military affairs here? Maréchal de Belleisle writes memorials, to which they pay no attention at the War office. Duverney writes memorials on his side, which his friend M. de Richelieu will not take into account. The discipline of the troops and officers depends entirely on the secretary of State for War; he fears to make powerful enemies, and for that reason he dares not take a violent course, because he sees that the king is repugnant to it. What can I do, I — charged with the political side of all this? Foresee, predict misfortunes, give gloom to friends, and feel gloom myself. This great machine depends on me only so far as my department goes; I think and write in vain; if we make war badly, everything will go to the devil; no pen can repair the mistakes of the sword. There is no example known of playing so great a stake with the same carelessness as they would a game of cards, and of not leaving to the architect the right of conducting the building they charged him to construct.

The idea of a prime-minister alarms every one; but without one there is no ministry. It would be useless to have here a minister who would make the other ministers his head clerks, who would oblige them to come and work at his house, and assume himself the externals of royalty; but one must be mad or stupid not to feel the need of some one who would bring the parts into harmony with the whole. What I can do, I do. I help the finances by removing obstacles which hinder the succour that the king needs. Instead of forty millions, the king has had sixty, and parliament has consented to it with a good grace. I hope also that if they will follow my plan for internal pacification there will be no question a year from now of the bull Unigenitus or of Jansenism. I regard, and I want others to regard, those matters as ended. You would do

well to make the pope encourage the king in all that concerns the archbishop [of Paris]. In two words, the archbishop refuses confessors to nuns who are not excommunicated, under pretext of their being Jansenists; whereas they have never appealed, and they have declared in writing that they were submissive to the archbishop as their superior, and to all the decisions of the Church received in the kingdom, and also that they have kept religiously the law of silence imposed by the king. But the archbishop wants them to explicitly declare their submission to the bull, contrary to the tenor of the king's declaration, which imposes silence on that subject. That is the state of the case. Our cardinals, and many bishops and archbishops who have been consulted, think the Archbishop of Paris wrong; that he ought to give confessors, and stop the scandal. The archbishop obstinately refuses; parliament is about to sue him. What can the king do to save the episcopal dignity and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, other than exile the archbishop? This outline will suffice you to write pertinently to Rome.

With regard to the project of the Court of Vienna to carry on the war in Silesia, I think it so contrary to our common interests, and so likely to prolong the war, that if it exists the king would have to take the course of sending all his subsidiary troops to the Court of Vienna, and content himself with an army of observation to restrain Holland and cover the Low Countries and Flanders; for who knows if the States-general may not be dragged in, and whether England may not light the flames of war in the Low Countries? Besides, how can they suppose in Vienna that the king would leave his coasts defenceless against an invasion by England, and Provence and Dauphiné stripped of troops face to face with the King of Sardinia?

Whatever military project may be determined on, it is you who will discuss it in Vienna. There is no idea of sending a military man to do so.

As for the journey of the Infanta Isabella, I own to you that I do not like to decide upon it among the fogs of the Seine. Try to obtain an establishment before the Infant and the Infanta write to the Emperor. With regard to the Duc de Bourgogne [the dauphin's eldest son, who died a child], the Infanta flatters herself to obtain him for the Infanta Louise; she will not sacrifice the hope of so good an affair, which may be said to be certain. Besides, it would not do for us to quarrel openly with the Court of Naples. The reasons for not speaking of the marriage yet to the Court of Spain are good, but there is some impropriety in concealing the matter so long.[1] I will speak to M. de Staremberg as to what relates to the interests of Count Kaunitz; he will be satisfied with me in that respect. Adieu, my dear count, I am devoted to you for life.

I have no time to read over my letter.

XXI.

December 31, 1757.

I shall not answer your last despatch, my dear count, until the fate of the army of M. de Richelieu, that of Germany, and in some sort that of France is decided. If we win the battle which must be fought on the other side of the Aller, our affairs will look better in the Gazette; in reality they will be very bad, because our commissariat and our troops are scattered about and we have no base of supplies; and because, with the spirit that reigns in the army, no good course can be followed. Divisions, bickerings, opposition, perhaps unwillingness and disgust are there. This is seen here, but I do not think they

[1] See Appendix.

are struck by it as they should be; for there was not a moment to lose in sending a general capable of imposing awe on the army and bringing order into everything.

Prince Henry of Prussia is marching with the corps of Maréchal Keith and a part of the Magdeburg garrison on M. de Soubise by way of Goslar and Hildesheim, and M. de Soubise is very weak, as all our forces are, from being scattered. This situation, without dismaying me, makes me reflect very seriously. That of our allies does not reassure me. The Swedes are running the greatest risk; they may be beaten at this moment; Mecklenburg is occupied in part by the Prussians who have pushed a column thus far. Where are we to plant ourselves? On the Rhine, as I told you long ago. But how are we to reach the Rhine, being unable to march as a *corps d'armée?* I dare not give the answer to that question. Such is our condition. Your memory is good; but you suppose a situation in which we may no longer be at this moment. *Either other generals more capable on both sides, or some decided course; it will not do to destroy ourselves.* In a few days I will tell you more. I wish the empress would obtain thirty thousand Russians and the fifteen thousand Swedes to support her this winter. The King of Prussia at bottom, is ruining his troops; it is only necessary to make head against him this winter and be ready with good arrangements in the spring.

The life that I lead is dreadful; I feel the evil so keenly, and I am so swaddled. I cannot remedy it, though I foresee it continually. Perhaps I shall be less sad in three days; but no event can change the foundation of things; therefore we must not be too elated if we beat our enemies.

I embrace you with all my heart.

XXII.

VERSAILLES, January 6, 1758.

The news from Leipzig, my dear count, informs us of the taking of Breslau and all within it.[1] Liegnitz and Schweidnitz will now fall, one after the other. I see that the Court of Vienna has lost within ten or twelve days three quarters of its troops and its officers. I see, too, that in the spring she will have many recruits and few soldiers. Russia, on her side, is selling her artillery horses at one hundred sous apiece. M. Keith [British envoy to Russia] is going to Saint-Petersburg with treasure. Do you believe that the Empress of Russia, ill and feeble as she is, will reject the advice of the great chancellor whom the English tempt with enormous gifts?

What then remains upon the scene? — the Empress Maria Theresa without an army, and the French between the King of Prussia and the Hanoverians, without supplies, without generals, and ill-disciplined. If the English can make Holland declare herself by entering the Low Countries, we shall be forced to return home — supposing always that our bad conduct and hunger have not already driven us from Germany. There is no hope that this position will change, because the war is conducted, both in Vienna and Versailles, by those who have never made war.

Our navy is enervated by the late campaign; we cannot expect from that direction any glory or any compensation. *My advice would therefore be to make peace and to begin by a truce on sea and land.* When I know what the king thinks of this idea, which is only in my way of thinking, but which

[1] Retaken December 19 from the Austrians, who had taken it November 24. — FR. ED.

good sense, reason, and necessity present to me, I will tell you of it fully.

Meantime try to make M. Kaunitz see two things equally true, namely: that the king will never abandon the empress, but that his Majesty cannot ruin himself with her. Our respective faults have made of a great project, which was infallible before the 5th of September last, a broken-necked, certain ruin. It was a fine dream, which it would be dangerous to continue; but it might be possible to take it up again some day with better actors and with military plans well conceived.

Have the goodness to use all your wits not to frighten M. Kaunitz, not to inspire him with distrust, but to discover from him precisely what the Court of Vienna is resolved upon. If it prefers to follow what its pride inspires rather than what reason should dictate, it will run more risk than we should run. It is certain that the king will be faithful to the empress, but it is very doubtful if he can continue his army in Germany. Besides which, we are threatened on our own coasts and in America. Charity begins at home. Neither must we injure the Swedes, nor trust to the help of Russia; it was the latter who began to break the chain of union and our prosperities.

The king will do all he can to sustain his allies; but I will never advise him to risk his crown. The more I have been intrusted with the making of his great alliance, the more I ought to be believed when I counsel peace, for it will destroy in part my work. The sacrifice of my self-love and my immense labour ought to keep me from being suspected. Still, if I saw generals fit to command our respective armies, and a good council of war in Vienna and Versailles I would not abandon the game. But as there is no change to hope for in those respects, and as time is hastening on, I turn my

thoughts towards the peace that all Europe expects from the wisdom of the king and the moderation of the Court of Vienna. If the empress will let us act, or will act in concert with us, we can come out of this honourably.

Meantime we must on both sides prepare to do better in war. This is the first step towards making peace. All that I say to you in this letter is only my own way of thinking; but it will put you in the way of enlightening me about that of the Court of Vienna; after that I will take the orders of the king. Adieu, my dear count; do not lose heart.

XXIII.

January 14, 1758.

I have written you at full length in my despatches, my dear count, but will recapitulate here. The King of Prussia has just signed a secret treaty with England, which will no doubt make the counterpart to ours. God grant it may not be executed. On the other hand, it is certain that Spain is preparing to join us; but she prepares slowly. If we mean to continue our continental war we must give up our maritime war; we cannot sustain the double burden for two years longer. Meantime we ought to know on what to count. I imagine that the Court of Vienna has renounced the idea of despoiling the King of Prussia, and consequently of the exchange you know of [the Low Countries], but it intends not to profit less than before, and without scruple, by our enormous subsidy, which exhausts the State by taking such immense sums out of the country.

It is necessary to know where we stand on a point so difficult, and in case we give money we must be secure of some real and tangible benefit — so that I may not be stoned by the populace on the conclusion of peace. Ostend and Niewport will be difficult to obtain, victory not having declared for us

in a very decided manner. The Dutch will always claim upon the treaties of Utrecht and Barrière. We shall have to fall back on Luxembourg and that wretched Chimay and Beaumont, which only make a dot on the map. *The demolition of Luxembourg is an essential point to which it seems to me we ought to fasten.* If Russia would act in earnest this winter our affairs would again look up.

The King of Prussia is resolved to attack M. de Richelieu by Hesse and on all sides; I fear that the head is turning of that army which has so lacked in will throughout the campaign. M. de Richelieu wants to return here as if he had nothing to do in Hanover. All his generals ask to return also, for the opening of little houses. I think M. de Richelieu will be permitted to return when the Comte de Clermont arrives to command in his absence, and probably after him. This is a secret from the public. God keep us from feather-heads in great affairs, and God keep the counsels of the king from little minds who do not see the disproportion that there is between their narrowness and the extent of great purposes!

If we keep our position in Hanover, I hope to bring about the neutrality of that country and take from England and Prussia the Hessians and the Brunswickers. But, I repeat, all these subsidies must depend on the diminution of our great subsidy; otherwise they will be impossible. The political fault the King of Prussia is now committing in irritating the Protestants would be very fatal to him if Germany did not hate the Court of Vienna more than she hates the King of Prussia. But I shall try to profit by it to restore our influence in Germany and save the Austrian Court in spite of itself, should it be no longer in a state to do so. I think that this is how we ought to act in such extremities. The course I have taken to bring the French troops nearer

home seems to me good policy. If, meantime, M. de Richelieu does not let himself be cornered,we can sustain the war some time longer, provided we have nothing to fear at home and need send none but our foreign troops and allies into the field. Russia alone can at this moment restore the balance and give us time to breathe.

I have now, my dear count, recovered from the shock I felt at the result of the repeated blunders which have been the source of all our misfortunes. I was given neither the power to prevent them nor that of remedying them. It is hard to lose one's reputation and the fruit of one's toil. I now think only of saving the State, of making peace, and then of leaving to whoso will take it a helm he cannot steer by. I desire not to die of anxiety and shame; my decision is made; since then I am tranquil and my head is clear.

I am in despair for Madame Infanta and her children; still, the marriage of her daughter may yet take place. Those people never break their word. I am, however, of opinion that it would be better to wait till the present chaos settles a little. Adieu, my dear count; they will never again catch me laying out great plans; embarking upon them only to find that they will not let me direct the workmen according to the plans agreed upon; of this I give you my word of honour.

XXIV.

January 19, 1758.

I have been much touched, my dear count, by the private letter you wrote me on the 3d of this month. It proves your judgment, your intellect, and your friendship for me equally. But do not again touch a chord which wounds every one and remedies nothing. My decision is made not to let myself yield to either disgust or fear, but to do my best in the office

I hold, to remedy, so far as it depends on me, the general and special evils that occur, not to abandon the battle so long as there are shots to face, and to make ready for my retirement when the opportune moment comes, avoiding equally to be or to seem ungrateful, and running no risk of dishonour. If fortune permits that the coming campaign shall sustain the honour of our affairs, it will give me time to prepare for this.

I think we shall have money for the present year; but it will be difficult to find enough for the next, unless events restore our credit, for our expenditures far exceed our circulation. I tell you always the true state of things in order that you may judge soundly of the course to take, and decide wisely. But take care that no one in Vienna knows of my private letters. M. de Staremberg slipped out a word to me which makes me fearful about this.

M. de Paulmy is about to retire [from the ministry of War]. He has asked for the embassy to Venice as a retreat. He is an honest man; but he has, on the one hand, too much self-importance to let himself be governed by capable men, and on the other, he is not able enough to govern himself. *This also is a secret.* I think Contades will have his place; this will give some consistency to that department during the war; but I doubt if Contades is capable of the detail necessary to correct the vices of every corner of that department. But, at any rate, we shall have during the war a minister who is well informed as to military matters. Crémille will be vexed, but he is necessary to the Comte de Clermont. As for the rest, the king will not propose any of his generals to the empress; if she asks him for Maréchal d'Estrées he will not refuse her; but it will be for her to give him his commission of command. Moreover, as our army remains in the Electorate of Hanover, it is not

possible to withdraw twenty-five thousand men from it until (1) it is recruited, and (2) it has either beaten the Hanoverians or driven them into a corner. That withdrawal would lead to our being driven from Germany; therefore, without changing or renouncing the agreement, we must shoulder time along until it is practicable, either by what I have said above or by junction with the Saxons.

As to all this, it would be well that you should arrange wisely and skilfully with the Court of Vienna, in order that it may not count on our support before the month of May or June. It would be leading it into error to conceal certain truths, but manage this in a way to let that Court meet the consequences and not you. Our army is very weak, and the communications we have to guard are immense. What will it matter if M. de Soubise starts six weeks sooner or six weeks later, provided he takes with him a large corps? but it would be risking everything if we detach it before the King of Prussia is sufficiently occupied in the other direction to relieve us of all fear that he might combine with the Hanoverians and attack us after the departure of the twenty-four thousand men. I think you will feel the justice of these reflections. We shall read to-day a memorial of Maréchal Daun. I don't know what our military men will think of it. For my part, I think the Austrians ought to revictual Schweidnitz and not renew the war in Silesia. That would give the King of Prussia a siege to make which would occupy a good part of his forces. But to end the war it is necessary to drive him from the Elbe and attack him in his own country.

Montazet has not yet arrived.

XXV.

January 19, 1758.

I hear by way of Sweden, my dear count, that Field-marshal Schwaldt has sent a detachment of ten thousand men from his army either to reinforce the Hanoverians (who, by the way, lack everything) or to reinforce the army of the King of Prussia in Silesia; either is equally possible, but I incline to think that these ten thousand men are going to Silesia, because his Prussian Majesty has the strongest desire to put total confusion into the empress's affairs. He will not succeed in so doing this season if he finds her people prepared.

I am vexed that M. de Richelieu, by his obstinate determination to get back to Paris, in spite of the want of order he has put into his army and his own lack of willingness in his operations, has forced his return. You know that the king never wanted to send him. He has good points, but it must be owned that his head is easily turned, that he will not do anything but what he fancies, and that he has thought more during the late campaign of making peace than of carrying on the war with vigour. Is the Comte de Clermont any better? Yes, if Crémille deserves his reputation. For the rest, I am more concerned than ever to put our frontiers in security. M. Yorke has inquired of several members of the Dutch republic how that republic would take a landing of British troops on their soil without requisition. England expects to force the hand of the republican authorities by exciting the people in this way.

Let us think first of our own safety. If the empress is determined to continue the war — which I do not disapprove, if she can do it with a prospect of success — you may feel assured that the king will never abandon her; and that our

alliance, in peace or war, can suffer no change. But remember it is a very different thing to have a material interest in the war from supporting it solely from generosity, nobleness, and policy. If we confine ourselves to these latter motives they ought to take what we can give and not exact more. If they wish to spur us by motives of self-interest we must know clearly how they hope to subdue the King of Prussia. It must be remembered that we entered upon this war solely on the assurance that Russia would act with all her forces and the Treaty even says that if any one of the powers withdraws its concurrence, the deficiency shall be made good. We embarked upon the war; Russia retires, or as good as retires; are we therefore to bear alone the burden and brunt of the day? Let us be noble, my dear count, but let us not be duped; let us be constant and faithful, but not destroy ourselves, and let us look to the safety of this kingdom. Meanwhile, let us prepare all our forces to act with vigour, or to be masters, up to a certain point, of the conditions of peace.

M. de Richelieu will grumble and cabal here. I advise him to the contrary. He ought to go to Richelieu for a time. As to M. de Soubise, he must have good officers with him. Castries proposed Bourcet instead of Montazet as his quartermaster-general. I am not of his opinion, though Bourcet has merit. Whatever happens, M. de Soubise must not be beaten for the second time; our friend would be torn in pieces by the populace.

Adieu, my dear count, it is my reason which disposes me to peace. If my courage were better seconded than it can be, I should be more defiant than reasonable.

XXVI.

January 25, 1758.

I answer, my dear count, your private letter of the 15th. You exhort me not to think of peace; you represent to me the shame and danger there would be in treating with the King of Prussia; whereas the Court of Vienna, by the measures it is taking, and those we are in a state to take, may end the next campaign gloriously, or at least place itself, after attempting efforts worthy of high courage, as much within reach of a shameful peace as it is to-day. I think that I can dispense with replying to your arguments by referring you to what I have already written on this matter, and still more to the answers you are yourself in a position to make. But it seems to me useful to point out still more clearly the state of the question.

1. The king is in no manner tempted to make peace with the King of Prussia. His Majesty's courage is not lowered, nor is it chilled on the motives that led him originally to take arms. Thus you have not to combat the king's opinion. Neither should Mme. de Pompadour be suspected of weakness. For myself, I think that no one can tax me with inconstancy or cowardice, and still less with having changed in system. But I am the minister of the king, responsible to him and to the country for the advice I give, and for the manner in which I look at affairs as vital as those in which we are now engaged. I think I know the resources both of this country and of our allies, as well as the manner in which it is probable they will be respectively employed. By this examination I think I see that we have nothing better to hope from the next campaign than we have found in the present one. We shall lose and will battles, but I do not see that we have any ground for

hope that we shall gain superiority; yet without that superiority I think we shall be much worse off at the end of the year, and much less able to make an honourable peace. When speaking of peace, I have always supposed that we should merely lend ourselves to it, because the distinct and decided intention of the king is not to treat of it until his allies are convinced that it is best for the common cause that peace should be made.

2. It is a question of examining, not lightly, but with all the necessary maturity and profundity, whether the Court of Vienna in continuing the war is not consulting its feelings of pride and wounded dignity more than the real resources it has for maintaining it; or rather, whether it is not relying too far on our means in further embarking us upon it, believing them to be greater than they really are.

3. I agree to the interest that we have in not allowing the King of Prussia to become the dictator of Germany; but do you believe the Courts of France, Vienna, Sweden, Russia, Saxony, Bavaria, etc., remaining united, will not hold the King of Prussia more in awe than armies acting ill, badly commanded, and in no way concerting one with another? You will tell me that they must be better commanded and directed. I answer you: "Find great generals; find ministers and councils who will direct the war with the superiority of M. de Louvois, — in a word, with talent, which alone is capable of doing great things. Where are those generals? Where are those ministers? And if they exist, would they be put in command? It is not the state of affairs that alarms me; it is the incapacity of those who conduct them, which it is not in my power to remedy. In this condition of things, I think that the wisest course would be to profit by the present moment, to prepare for the execution hereafter of a work which is now out

of proportion to the strength of those to whose hands it is confided. Moreover, I have always doubted, and with reason, of the good faith of our war office in supporting the present system.

4. I am very glad that you agree with me that the best way of bringing the King of Prussia to reason is to make peace with England; and on that I am reflecting night and day. I have long thought of Spain as the negotiator; but if England were less in love with the King of Prussia, and less convinced that a continental war diminishes our means for maritime war, believe me, I should have sought it before now by treating directly with her, and sending her my ultimatum on a sheet of paper.

5. When I spoke to you of a truce, I merely meant to give the Court of Vienna time to re-make an army, and to ourselves the power to send her one. If that Court is in force, it is with weapons in hand that we ought to negotiate; I agree to that heartily; and as soon as the Court of Vienna is in force there is no need of a truce.

6. You will surely feel that if we are willing to run the risks of a second campaign, it is necessary to call the attention of the Court of Vienna to these risks, in order that it may do us the justice we deserve, and that it may itself feel the danger it runs and makes us run. It would be imbecile in us to deliver ourselves over bound hand and foot, without admitting and making others admit that we see our situation.

From all these points you will gather that we have a heavy game to play. Of the seventy millions we have just obtained, twenty millions are already spent. The navy costs sixty millions this year, without paying a *sou* on its back debt, or the whole of its current expenses. Where shall we look for more pecuniary resources? We are about to subsidize ten thousand Swedes and more than ten thousand Saxons; what

Thersbusch

Frederick the Great

Mau

an expense added to our already enormous expenditures! If we had Colberts, Desmarets, or clever madmen like Law, we might find expedients. The public has no confidence; it is given over to cavilling and grumbling. No ministers, no council, no generals, no will in some, no activity in others. I tell you my thought: we must be mad not to desire that the Court of Vienna should make peace, and not to advise it to desire to do so.

That is my opinion; and yet I feel as you do all the shame of yielding, of abandoning a great project, of enduring, as it were, punishment. Give me men and I will risk all; incapable as I am of guiding the machine of war, I could, with firmness and foresight, have come better out of this campaign than those who were charged with it. How can you expect me not to tremble when I see my work in the hands of those who have spoilt it, and have wished to spoil it?

But, my dear count, I am making very useless remarks to you, inasmuch as the Court of Vienna has decided on its course, and as the king has taken his not to treat of peace without the empress. But remember hereafter that I saw *a moment* which wisdom pointed out to me with its finger, a moment by which our allies and ourselves may one day groan that we did not profit.

We will send twenty-four thousand men into Bohemia, although they are scarcely needed if the empress has ninety thousand. But when shall we send them? I have been urging it for the last two weeks, but nothing has yet been done. Meanwhile, if the King of Prussia is at Magdeburg, as they say he is, and if he joins ten or fifteen thousand men to the Hanoverians, I should not be surprised if our army were driven out for want of subsistence. In that case the support we send to the empress could not arrive till

August, because this affair would not be a retreat, but a rout.

God preserve me from ever again governing affairs over which I am not the master! I am corrected for life. I hoped that the same confidence that chose me would give me a superiority in the Council for execution; but I have never had it and cannot have it now. Perhaps a little more is thought of me than of the others, but my influence is none the greater in decisive moments.

People might see in this complaint only an inordinate ambition, and they would see wrong. I love neither the Court, nor offices, nor dignities. My family is even less well treated than other families of their equals. How comes that? From the fact that I ask nothing for myself. I have wanted to secure to the king the place that belongs to him in Europe, to my friends a lasting consideration, to myself a great reputation. They have said to me: "Do great things, but do them with the poorest workmen, over whom you will not have the right of command, nor that of forcing them to obey by superior orders." Hence I saw the capitulation at Kloster-Zeven, the negotiation at Halberstadt the separation of the army after the battle of Rosbach, when M. de Richelieu could have held the King of Prussia beyond the Elbe by marching on the Sala or by seizing Saxony; I saw the failure of all, and I knew how little stuff remained to us to repair such great misfortunes and such heavy faults. *I saw all that;* I see it still with the deepest regret in the world. But after making the representations of an honest man I can be as rash as another, and far more than another, for I see clearly where that rashness is taking us.

M. Kaunitz thinks he noticed that you were sad and thoughtful, and he wishes to know the cause of this change;

he has written M. de Staremberg that he thinks he perceives that the defeat at Lissa and its results have made us fear that the empress is not in a condition to carry on the war. On this he enters with much spirit and candour into long details. It is already a great point that Prince Charles is no longer to command the army; I will even tell you that I am not so troubled about the Austrian army as I am about our own. They have zeal and more obedience than we have, and I see that, while they are less active than ourselves by nature, in urgent cases they execute quickly great things. I shall be delighted to see the empress with a fine army next spring; if I were sure of what will happen to our army between now and then I should be much less troubled.

We intend to give the empress all the money we captured at Osnabrück, which from present appearances we think belonged to England. In any case, however, we shall return it when we know to whom it belongs. It is thought there are eight or nine millions. With what we have already paid Sweden this advances us well with the Court of Vienna. The answer Count Kaunitz made to your memorial pleases me, although it comes to no conclusion. It is well to see how our allies look at the objects we have in common.

With regard to the Saxons, I am working at an agreement about them, and about the revenues of territory conquered by means of the Swedes. The departure of the Comte de Clermont and Chevalier de Courten to travel in the empire (as I think I have already told you), does not allow my bureaus one moment's leisure, and affairs allow me none either. You will not believe it, from the length of this letter; but I think it very important to inform you of everything in detail, without the varnish of the bureaus.

Do not be alarmed by my writing to you what I think.

You will never find me advising a weak course, still less one of bad faith; I am incapable of it.

You will find a copy of the memorial we have sent to Holland. I do not shirk the question of Ostend and Nieuport. We shall settle that, if fortune seconds us, by another copy of the secret treaty and other ratifications, or simply by changing the date when communicated or made public. That secret treaty is until now merely a pledge that our mutual safety required from one to the other. We can assign it to any period we may like to choose when the time comes. As we are, so far, the only parties to it, we are the absolute masters of it. Besides, it is not now a question of the cession of the Low Countries, but solely of the provisional arrangement of Ostend and Nieuport.

M. de Lobkowitz ought to be content with the king, who talked with him for three quarters of an hour at Mme. de Pompadour's, and told him, on wishing him *bon voyage*, to assure the empress that his alliance with her would be eternal; he also gave him a letter for her in his own hand-writing (a copy of which I enclose), and his portrait surrounded by very fine diamonds for M. de Lobkowitz himself.

I give this packet to M. de Lobkowitz; for I think they are not too inquisitive in Vienna; but, in any case, nothing will be found in this letter but very true details, which can give rise to none but wise reflections.

We are now about to thresh the whole thing over again. I dread the return and the temper of M. de Richelieu. The folly that he showed in wishing to return under such critical circumstances decided his recall.

I change my mind; I will send you a courier with the points which must be immediately agreed upon with the Court of Vienna about the sending of the twenty-four thousand men. M. de Lobkowitz shall carry the rest of the

despatches about which I have told you, if they are ready. But the principal matter cannot bear delay. The king will send none but Germans to the empress. The French must remain together and not inundate France and foreign lands with epigrams against the Austrians; and also the whole Court must not bemoan M. de Soubise if a couple of his colonels should be wounded.

Adieu, my dear count; you regard me as your friend and you have reason to do so.

I think M. de. Montazet has gone. M. de Paulmy would not make him a brigadier; which is unjust. Write to Mme. de Pompadour.

XXVII.

January, 30, 1758.

I have received, my dear count, a letter from M. Ogier, which gives me great pleasure. It is certain that Denmark has rejected the new offers (much more extensive than the first) of England and the King of Prussia, who have each attempted to catch it by the bait of subsidies greater than ours, and the still more attractive hope of the exchange of Holstein; that is the great annoyance of joint-ownership. Fear of the King of Prussia and of his successes does, however, intimidate the Danes. Their minister in Vienna has sent them word of the plan formed by you for the defence of Mecklenburg by Danish troops. I think it would be better not to insist on any particular plan, but to try and bring Denmark to take sides, inserting in the agreement that we would consult together as to the active services of the troops she lends to us, in order to expose them to the least risk while aiding effectually the common cause. This point once settled we shall be more at ease. A first step leads to another.

Here is my idea, on which I shall send instructions to M. Ogier: In view of the difficulties which the Grand-duke finds in the exchange of Holstein, difficulties which it would take much time to smooth over, I have thought that the Court of Vienna ought to consent that East Friesland be ceded to Denmark in exchange for the part of Holstein which the Grand-duke possesses, or to remain with Denmark as her own possession in case this agreement is not carried out; also that for the said exchange the Courts of France and Vienna should bind themselves to employ their good offices and those of their allies. The actual cession of East Friesland and the guarantee of that province to Denmark are, as I think, the shortest means, the simplest, and the strongest to determine that power to be with us. *M. Kaunitz would be compensated in the way he most desires, and according to the overtures you have already made him on this subject.* This is what I think. I shall send M. Ogier word to wait until I receive your answer, and to act according to this plan if it is adopted by the Court of Vienna.

For the rest, the Duke of Mecklenburg is waiting, in order to take his complaints to the Diet, till the emperor explains himself. He is not satisfied with the reply the Aulic Council made to him; he distrusts the intentions of several members of that Council. Try to make the Court of Vienna more favourable to him; it has the greatest interest in this, and so has the common cause. It is to attach the Duke of Mecklenburg to us that I have consented to many things which Champeaux has passed lightly over, the better to bind that prince to us; but this does not bind us beyond the tie of good offices, and depends on future contingencies and the will of the parties interested. The Court of Vienna will, of course, accede only to such articles as

may suit it; but this is not a case in which to be stiff and pedantic, as it usually is towards the Protestant princes.

The Comte de Clermont starts in two days. The pillage of our army has been pushed to extremes, and on that point M. de Richelieu is not excusable. What is done is done, and there is no more to be said about it. M. de Digne has the bishopric of Orléans, and the Bishop of Troyes has sent in his resignation. I am trying to get the Bishop of Auxerre to do the same, and so give peace to the interior.

Adieu, my dear count, I believe that you never doubt my friendship. My memorial sent to Holland has disconcerted the English and Prussian cabal.

XXVIII.

February 4, 1758.

I know, my dear count, that Castries wrote you that the Court of Vienna was not to be charged with the victualling of the twenty-four thousand men; but Duverney counts on that arrangement, and has taken no measures for their subsistence in consequence. Therefore, to remedy the matter, I think you must see to it that, in paying for them, the troops are furnished with such supplies as we ourselves give them. If not, that one thing will create an endless fuss and much delay.

XXIX.

February 4, 1758.

The perpetual suggestions that the nuncio makes to you, my dear count, are destitute of foundation. Apparently his friends in Rome have written him about the rumour spread in that city since the equivocal suspension of the decree of Venice, of the pope desiring to include me in the next promotion of cardinals. I have paid no attention to that

rumour, nor have I answered those who gave me the information, accompanied with advice as to how to secure my nomination. My principle as to the hat is, not to allow myself even the thought of it, and to leave to the king and circumstances the care of my destiny in that respect. I should certainly be flattered to be a cardinal, and I have thought on that subject all there is to think; but as this ambition would torment me if it were strong, and as the hat would not make me as happy as the desire to get it might make me unhappy, I do not look for it in any sort of way; I even think I should be lacking in respect for the king if I did look for it. I am too much under his eye for him to forget me, and certainly I shall never obtain anything except through him. It may suit him, or it may not suit him, that I should be a cardinal; the period of that event may not be indifferent to him; consequently, I never look for it, and I think I ought not to look for it. There is the pure truth. Thus I beg you to let drop the nuncio's suggestions, to give no information on the subject, and when he speaks of it again to tell him there has never been any question of this appointment except the rumours spread about Rome which do not deserve much attention.

I own to you, my dear count, that the treasury at Wesel filled with bombshells shocked me to death; but it embarrasses me still more. We are advancing in public notoriety in view of the Court of Vienna! The exposure, pure and simple, of the fact is the best eloquence we can employ in our defence.

Montmartel is to supply us with a million florins, and is arranging to quickly give us more. We shall perish through money. I have long seen and feared this; and it is on this fear that the arguments I have made to you in my preceding letters were founded. [The expenditures of the min-

istry of Foreign Affairs during the year 1757 were 57,500,000 *livres.*]

The pope, an impatient and bad negotiator, in the days when the Venetian Senate was forced to declare the suspension, pure and simple, of the decree, became very weary of all that, and has now permitted Cardinal Archinto to open conferences with the Venetian ambassador in Rome. By this mistake he will lose the merit of the deference to which the Senate was forced by us, and affairs will not be any sooner arranged. I ask pardon of His Holiness, but that is not the way to deal with the Venetians.

We have information that England wants to add fifteen thousand men to the Hanoverian army. That will embarrass us if the Comte de Clermont does not find means to wring Prince Ferdinand's neck before the junction; he had the desire to do so. M. de Richelieu is about to arrive. He seems to be pretty philosophical. God grant he be wise after he gets here.

The King of Prussia has, they say, a desire to enter Moravia on the 1st of March, and then push on to Vienna; this rumour may be spread as a blind; but it might also be very foolish, for the Austrians to pay no attention to it, and find themselves weak in Bohemia.

Adieu, my dear count. I trust that my recent horoscopes may not be verified. The great point is to make Denmark declare herself. Diplomacy, if it succeeds, will have done the impossible.

XXX.

February 9, 1758.

How can you suppose, my dear count, that I should take your counsels and your ideas in bad part? When they are not in conformity with the king's resolutions, I will tell you

so plainly, and I know that your method is not to contend against the orders of the Court. When the king's resolutions are not absolutely taken, I will gladly profit by your ideas, and with the greatest docility. I am not such a fool as to be jealous. Your last letters have given me a very good opinion of your discernment; but they think here that you have spoken too frankly, and have not put enough graduation into your overtures. I think you have been frightened by the idea of our usual weakness, and that you have communicated your fears by merely having them yourself; they having caught the eyes of M. Kaunitz. My intention was that you should lift the bandage which often covers the eyes of the Court of Vienna when its self-love is concerned; that if that Court seemed disposed for peace, you should put no obstacles in the way of it; that if, on the contrary, it desires to continue the war, and still has the means to do so, you should not exhort it to peace.

In other respects, my dear count, the picture I made you of our condition is not changed; there is no government here, no nerve, no foresight. I support the political machine by contrivance; but as I am only the result of the other departments, my cares and pains are useless. I have the courage of a lion, but not that of Don Quixote; I have never yet fought with windmills.

However this may be, the Russians are at Königsberg. If they march to the Vistula, they can also branch off into Brandebourg and relieve the Swedes. The King of Prussia has attempted to carry off the Marquis de Fraigne from Zerbst. The latter defended himself, behaved well, and was helped and maintained by the Prince of Anhalt. Just see how far that King of Prussia carries his arbitrary will. You will tell me that we ought to chain him up; agreed, but we must first forge chains that he cannot break.

Madame Infanta is very well pleased. She ardently wishes to provide for the fate of her daughter, who is growing up; she is right. But for my part, I think of the fate of the grandchildren, and I see it all in the air. We shall manœuvre on our side, and perhaps keep the suitor *visibly hidden*. If I were simply Abbé de Bernis and nothing else, I should have been shocked to death at the tirade M. Kaunitz told you to send me on the exchange, pure and simple, of Parma and Piacenza; but, as minister, I am inaccessible to the sentiments of humanity. I merely warn you that the great chancellor, honest man as he is, is touchy and distrustful. I said to Comte de Staremberg the very things I wrote to you; he saw only good sense and wisdom in my reflections, and no change of system. Do not tell that to his master, or you will get him into trouble. The empress must have a Broglie; but she has the best of the two undoubtedly.

Adieu, my dear count. I am touched by your friendship and confidence, and I see with pleasure that you rely on mine.

XXXI.

February 9, 1758.

The letter of M. de Belleisle, Monsieur le comte, will inform you of what is taking place. The misfortunes I predicted have happened, but they can be repaired. I believe that our army can put itself in safety. The difficulty is to feed it behind the Weser. We owe all that has happened now to our generals and the late minister of war. Our expenses will be multiplied; but it is still very possible that the events of the campaign will be the same as they would have been had we kept the Elector of Hanover. I shall not send off the courier until we know more certainly what position our army will take.

I think that the Court of Vienna ought to confine itself

at the opening of the campaign to a safe defensive in Moravia and Bohemia, making good intrenched camps there. The Russians may give to both of us the time to breathe.

XXXII.

February 20, 1758.

I beg you, my dear count, to be so kind as to send the inclosed letter from Madame la dauphine to Prince Xavier [of Saxony, her brother].

Do not forget, I beg you, my commission for a complete woman's costume, blue ground, embroidered in white silk on a summer stuff.

We learn that the Prussians are assembling on the side of Magdeburg and Halberstadt, to attack Wolffenbuttel on one side, while the Hanoverians attack it from the Vegezack side. It is thought that the thaw, and the melting of the snows may suspend this enterprise. M. de Montazet has just arrived.

XXXIII.

February 28, 1758.

I am not pedantic, Monsieur le comte, not fussy over trifles, because, before I was a minister, I was neither a master of petitions nor a provincial intendant. I was not worried lest, with a mind like yours, we should fail to be of the same opinion fundamentally; but I own to you that the second courier despatched by the Comte de Clermont, makes me fear that we are losing precious time in pulling ourselves out of the abyss. I am not relieved of apprehension. If the Russians continue to act in good faith, we shall gain time to recover ourselves; but if we recross the Weser, be sure (unless our enemies are fools) that we shall also recross the Rhine; and then it will be felt how

much better it would have been to make peace while we still possessed the electorate of Hanover and the States of the King of Prussia in Westphalia, than to have tempted fortune with impotent means. Since they have resolved to put Maréchal de Belleisle at the head of the War office, I breathe freer; he understands the thing; he has the tone, the experience, and the reputation. We are friends. The Council revives like a tree from which a rotten branch has been lopped off. There still remain two others, one of which has sap, it is true, but very flabby. If one were to try to substitute a vigorous twig, one would have to make over the whole machine. M. de Soubise protects him, in which he is very wrong; for fools, even with big stomachs and smiling faces, are good for nothing but feeding and sleeping.

You have made the most of your effusion of heart with M. Kaunitz, because a man of intelligence makes the most of everything. I am very glad that more activity and less self-confidence have resulted from it. Apropos, I have written to him on the death of his mother and on our affair; I am expecting his answer. You spoke very truly in assuring him that I never keep rancour. I feel, and I show that I feel, after which I am quiet; that is my nature, and more than that, it is my rôle and my duty.

I recommend to you the affair of the Genoese; they are intolerable and clumsy, though sly. Still, they have to be protected, and we must see whether by curtailing some of their demands we cannot reduce their affairs to a few points of mutual acceptance. It is well to treat kindly and protect a people who keep guard over one of the gates of Italy.

I think that if we are in Hanover three months hence, and if the Russians, in spite of M. de Broglie's horoscope, do not remain on the Vistula, we shall still be able to make an

honourable peace. I have thrown out several little foundation stones for our private peace with England. Spain is playing a doubtful rôle with that country, which does not yet convince me that she is angry in earnest. Still, when one sees the indications one may suppose some inward principle.

All that we can do for the Elector of Bavaria, whom we want to keep in the circle of the princes of the Empire, is to make over to him, complete, his own body of troops, twelve hundred to eighteen hundred men or thereabouts, for this campaign only. You need not tell this to the Court of Vienna, unless you see no inconvenience in doing so. I am telling you all that is written by and to the Comte de Clermont. You ought to know all, and tell only that which is suitable to be told.

Money is making a cruel war upon us. The navy lacks it, and if we lose Louisbourg it will not be for want of doing our best to do nothing. Adieu, Monsieur le comte; I love you with all my heart.

XXXIV.

March 17, 1758.

My prophecies are already one half fulfilled, my dear count; we are now upon the Weser and shall soon be on the Rhine, after vainly endeavouring to guard the Lippe. I am making every effort to keep Emden, and consequently East Friesland; without which our negotiation with Denmark, which was getting on so well, is strangled. Every time that diplomacy performs a miracle, the army finds a way to ruin all. This is my fourth experience of that. In spite of the extent of our line and the want of forage, we should not have been driven from the electorate of Hanover if there had been any nerve in the Comte de Clermont's council; that has

been plainly demonstrated to me. But Crémille, who is a great man for details, has not the vigorous soul that risks the great strokes of a game.

My advice, my dear count, is that we make war on the King of Prussia as Cardinal de Richelieu made war upon the emperor,— that is to say, with Germans; we ourselves are only fit, until there come new generals and discipline is restored among our troops, we are only fit, I say, to *observe*, *threaten*, and *secure*, — not act. D'Affry [minister to Holland in 1756] sends me word that it seems certain the English are about to send twenty thousand men on to the continent. See if we can avert this. I hold firm to my first idea. The king must send his foreign troops to the Court of Vienna, with some French cavalry (who are to-day the best of our forces). Let our German regiments be increased by twenty-five or thirty men to each company; let Fischer and others of his kind recruit continually in Germany to keep our regiments complete. I shall pursue to the infernal regions the neutrality of Holland and peace with England. Our affairs are going better in Spain; but the marriage of the Infanta Isabella to the Grand-duke, if not properly communicated to the King of Spain, will spoil everything, infallibly. It is through Spain that we shall make peace with England or get the means of conquering her. Make this important truth felt. Let us sustain the Russians, the Swedes, the Empire, win over Denmark, restrain Holland, and save by so doing the Low Countries. Let us not go too far from our own frontier; but, above all, let us find money — without it all will perish. There is but one way to do that, namely, to retrench and to show the hope of a good future administration to the people. Instead of this, far from diminishing favours and expenditures, they are greater than ever. Besides which, the navy is a gulf; it has no order, it

devours money. You know very well the only remedy for these evils, but it is useless to think of it.

There is a question now of giving me more influence and stability; the king has wished to do this by the gift of a new abbey [of Trois-Fontaines] which would keep me from ruining myself, but it would add nothing to my personal consideration; this favour, however, added to that of the *cordon bleu*, has certainly had some effect. With regard to the hat, about which you once wrote to me, the king said to me that he "was very sure I should never play shuffling tricks about it, and that if the pope had a desire to give it to me, as he apparently had, he would let him know."

Yesterday the good king wrote me a letter worthy of Henri IV. He wishes you to assure the empress that he has always desired to be united to her, that he will always desire it, and shall die with that desire; that, as for him, he wishes the fulfilment of the secret treaty, because (in his own words) there is nothing but the neighbourhood of the States that can ever lead into a quarrel between persons of their sort. You can boldly assure the empress and Count Kaunitz of these inviolable sentiments. But it is not enough to wish a thing; some one must be in a position to conduct matters to it. Cut off everything that has the air of prime-minister, but let them grant me enough confidence to enable me to adopt and make others adopt what I shall propose.

I regard you as my intimate friend, and I therefore speak to you with open heart. The story of Mme. de Coislin did grieve me for the king's sake, for our friend's sake, and for the sake of our treaty, but I have been reassured. If that woman, counselled, and, thank God, badly counselled by the enemies of Mme. de Pompadour and of the State, had conducted herself better she would have ruined the alliance under ground before any of us were aware of it. Nothing is

more important for the court of Vienna than the preservation of our friend, and the increase of my influence in general matters. I am satisfied with the king on the first head, and even on the second; but he must be aided and strengthened to put his own influence into public affairs, for he never dreams of doing this or of proposing to do it — perhaps he would be sorry to be made to see the necessity of it.

You will see by my answer to Count Kaunitz that I do not disguise the truth from him. But you can assure him that if he is brave I am as much so; and that the king will never think of a reconciliation with the King of Prussia, nor of any weakening of the secret treaty. As for me, I fear but two things: (1) that we shall lack money; (2) that the empress will be crushed in the first three months of the coming campaign. I would that her armies were commanded by a new Fabius. As a man, I desire the continuation of the war; as a minister I fear and foresee the consequences, and I feel all the difficulties.

XXXV.

March 24, 1758.

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." I verify, Monsieur le comte, the meaning of that proverb. The shameful and grievous accompaniments of our retreat,[1] in doing me all the harm possible, did not strike me dead, because I had foreseen it for the last four months. You have known only imperfectly the disorder of our armies, the lack of principles by which they are governed and placed; thus you will surely be confounded by the spectacle of the day. I had pictured it to you before the event; but you probably thought, and I forgive you, that the picture was overdrawn.

[1] The French were driven from Hanover by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. — Tr.

In great affairs there are precious moments to seize; after which, if we allow them to go by, we must run after them, incurring many dangers, expenses, and difficulties. There remains to us now, to each and all, to be faithful, to be wise in our defensive, and not to lose our heads; there can be recovery from even worse things. At least, let us avoid worse evils; let us draw closer than ever the bonds that unite us to our allies; let us act and share our means like brothers. This is no time to play a shrewd game.

M. Boullongue seeks resources, and I even have hopes that he will find them. I wish I could be sure they would be well employed. But to remedy all our evils, present and to come, one and the same head must guide all parts of the machine; you feel this, you have said this, but thinking it and saying it are useless. Let us now see how we can avoid the greatest evils, and let us lay aside the thought of greater good. I have a courage and a health which amaze me, for they are shaken to their centre every hour of the day.

The event in Russia [dismissal of the prime-minister Bestuchef], may save the country if the Russian army is not weakened and goes as a whole with due precaution where it is bound. As for Poland, I understand nothing about it; I cannot understand affairs that are so mixed with shuffling and chicanery. You will soon receive a courier from me. Thank Mme. de Stainville for the pains she has taken to get me that lady's costume. I wish my gratitude could procure you both a happier life. You know it is not my fault if it is not more brilliant. Love me always. You will find me more amiable in future, because I am more hardened than I was.

XXXVI.

VERSAILLES, March 31, 1758.

I received last evening, Monsieur le comte, your despatches of the 20th, to which was added the grand embroidered costume. It is a white ground and blue flowers, and I was asked for a blue ground with white flowers, but it will be liked just as well as it is. This is a commission, and therefore, I must pay you at once.

You will receive a long letter from the Comte de Clermont. We must pardon him many things in the chaos that surrounds him. His intentions are good, and if his counsellors were firmer there would not be so much to desire. Crémille is here; he insists to me that M. de Richelieu's position in Hanover was untenable, and that of the Weser also, for want of collected supplies. As for me, I would rather have destroyed our army by a battle than by a retreat; I even believe that the former would have saved more men; but all is said. I thought to die of shame and grief. We must try to live. All that has happened is grief to me, but no surprise. The moments lost on the Sala and the battle of November 5 [Rosbach] had led me to divine the horoscope of all this.

It will be but half an evil if we can carry on the war; but money will be lacking; it lacks already. Also, there is neither head nor courage nor will in the army; here, the will is strong to be faithful, and to risk one's very existence rather than make peace. This is heroic; but to maintain it men of honour must be differently treated; mere talkers must be silenced; for they serve the King of Prussia better by their talk than his victories or the monstrous blunders of his enemies. The king must govern or let some one govern in his name and by his authority. As this will never be done,

I wail within me because we shall put the climax to our ruin and our shame.

I see that Vienna has no thought of all this; apparently they have had a revelation from Saint Brigitta announcing the success of this campaign. As for me, who judge by facts only and from a knowledge of the resources on all sides, the generals, the ruin of credit, the universal ill-will of the whole nation, I see that (unless they employ the only means that can cure such great evils) it would be wiser to postpone the game than to lose it wholly. I own that it is late to think of this. But we shall be made to think of it in a day when things will be even worse than they are now; I do not like to play such stakes at a game in which we are dupes.

After having told the plain truth of things as they are, here is what may be counted on: The army of M. de Soubise is safe; it will begin its march on the first of June. Our own army will be a force of sixty thousand men, exclusive of Saxons, Palatiners, and Austrians. It cannot act until the end of July. If the Hanoverians by that time consent to be neuter, we will increase the force under M. de Soubise, and make ours an army of observation. If they are determined to have war, we shall make it step by step and methodically, renouncing the marches of Alexander, because we have not the genius for them. Believe me, Monsieur le comte, the most contemptible of all nations at the present moment is our own, because it has no species of honour; it thinks only of money and of repose. We must change our morals; and this work, which would require centuries in other lands, could be done in a year in ours, *if there were doers.*

Minden has basely surrendered [March 14, 1758]. A corporal of Lyonnais with a few hundred men forced two Hanoverian outposts and cut their throats. The Marquis de Maurogies, who is a relative of mine and very brave, showed

no head, because he was surrounded by weak and cowardly souls. Our soldiers are deserting in bands along the Rhine. A gibbet even does not restrain them, because the evil is inveterate and panic terror general. Moreover, our most top-lofty generals are inwardly enemies to this work; they are laughing in their beards at the discomfiture they have quietly occasioned by their weak counsels. All things serve the King of Prussia; all are betraying the king. In spite of this, if money were not on the point of lacking us I should still hope.

You will tell me that there are still resources on our side; I agree; but who is there to use them? Where is Colbert, to put them to work? Where is Louis XIV., to inspire that soul which is the first of all the resources of a State? It is believed here that with ordinary tools great miracles can be done. That is never true, and less than ever now. Let us not forget that we have to do with a king who is his own general, his own minister, his own commissary, and, when required, his own grand-provost. Those three points of vantage are over all our ill-employed and ill-combined resources.

The Comte de Clermont has thought proper, in spite of our representations, to order Emden evacuated. We have sent him orders to send the troops back there, if there is still time, with all that is needed to sustain a siege. They wanted to evacuate Hanau also; we opposed that with all our strength; fortunately, Prince Henry took the road to Leipzig. There is a rumour in Frankfort that Dresden has been surprised and taken by the Austrians; I have not believed it because it did not seem likely. Judge, my dear count, of my condition (I, whose nature is always to reflect) at seeing what must happen in the present, and in calculating events by the men who conduct our affairs and the resources that remain to us; my nerves, whatever courage and philosophy I may

have, are acutely shaken. It is not the misfortunes that overwhelm me; it is the certainty that the right means will never be employed; it is impossible for me, in matters where success depends on conduct, to look to Providence; for I know that Providence abandons fools and cowards, and favours only men of intelligence and courage.

My reported quarrel or coolness with Mme. de Pompadour has gone the rounds of Paris. The object is to set us at variance; but as I love her with all my heart and abhor ingratitude, we shall always be intimate friends; and when our opinions are not the same we shall dispute, — because I never abandon what I think to be the truth, — but you may be sure that we shall never quarrel. I know to what I destine myself when peace is made; therefore my future is secure — provided that my present daily griefs, my bad days and my bad nights, do not ruin my health (the work is far advanced); a hundred thousand francs a year from benefices are not worth the sacrifices I am daily making of my life and my self-love. I love the king; I pity him with all my heart, — an honest man, capable of friendship, desiring good only, and letting evil be done to tarnish the brilliancy of a reign that might have been glorious and tranquil.

I am very sorry — but a man must choose his course. I see no other than not to be accountable to the public for the evil work that is being done. Everybody appeals to me to redress these wrongs. I have the will; is it my fault that I have not the power? My dear count, I have pleasure in writing to you, because I like to speak to those who understand and feel. You have nothing to answer in all this; these are chords it is useless and imprudent to touch again.

We must have a master here; I desire one, and I do not desire that I should be that one. I have the strongest reasons not to look for that, and you know them. It is with

this idea that they are calculating in Paris that I shall quarrel with our friend, as being an obstacle in my way. First, I do not see why it need be one; she would have only to decide upon my plans; the work would go on and each would keep his place; but would she do so, and on all points? You know enough to decide that question.[1] Second, I would rather die at once than fail in the gratitude and friendship that I owe to her. Hence I conclude that after peace is made there remains to me no other course than that of an honest retirement; for I will no longer drag on existence here. My honour is my own, and I will not allow it to be tarnished in and by the hand of others.

I desire to see a little more clearly into the results of the dismissal of M. Bestuchef, and also into the position of the Comte de Brühl before I send a new minister to Warsaw. Meantime, while I am looking for one capable of executing a special commission in that country, the waters may clear. It is impossible to disentangle the truth from the briars and bushes that choke the affairs of Poland. I think that, at bottom, M. de Broglie has good principles, but he does not conciliate them with either persons or circumstances. It ought to be said in his justification that he has had to do with furious men.

Until we have finished running away, it is not possible to repair matters; when we finally arrive at the prescribed limits you will see what enormous expenditures will be required to put an army so dilapidated into condition. We shall first put the auxiliary corps in motion; that is just and reasonable. After which, my dear count, let us content

[1] When the Duc de Choiseul took the position which Bernis here points out, after the latter's dismissal and exile, he became the tyrant of Mme. de Pompadour for the remaining six years of her life. It may have been better for the country, but she herself must often have regretted the gentle, honest friendship which she threw away. — Tr.

ourselves with observing and menacing, and, at most, with seizing a part of the territory we have just abandoned in order to maintain our affairs and our allies; but let us not commit ourselves to long marches for distant objects. The same blunders would be done over again, and we should meet with final disaster.

XXXVII.

March 30, 1758.

Mme. de Pompadour has just told me, my dear count, that she saw Montmartel in Paris yesterday and that we shall have money. I think I ought to give you this good news to remove the gloom which my long private letter must have given you; which, nevertheless, you must take for law and the prophets, because it goes to the essential truth of things. The king cannot in honour diminish the alms he gives to the royal family of Saxony, all the more because the maintenance of the fortress of Königstein is a condition of this arrangement.

The grand costume is thought very pretty; therefore I thank you with all my heart; but send me the bill.

XXXVIII.

VERSAILLES, April 7, 1758.

I pity you with all my heart, my dear count, for the embarrassing, painful, and humiliating rôle which the shameful conduct of our army is making you play in Vienna. Mine here is cruel enough. The public turns always to me to ask for justice on the follies that are committed. We spend enormous sums, but the people never know how they are employed; at any rate, they see no useful results from them. Sometimes M. de Boullongne laughs to heaven and says

that he is certain of help, and sometimes he does not know where to turn. I do not see how we can get through this month of April. The navy absorbs millions, yet we have not a single squadron at sea, and one may bet a thousand to one that we shall lose Louisbourg for want of having sent it in good season the help it needs. A miracle alone can pull us from the bog in which we flounder.

Montmartel has been ill a month. Boullongne does nothing but keep the inventory of outlay and receipt. Montmartel fears to risk his fortune; his wife besets him and makes him gloomy, and I, I am obliged to go and restore his head and lose twenty-four hours a week in coaxing him, and asking him, for the love of God, to find money for the king. The same rôle must be played with his brother [Pâris-Duverney], without which all is lost; they want to go away and leave everything in confusion. The king knows this. I use all my rhetoric. No one concerns himself for the present or for the future. I have to die daily of this indifference; I pass sad days and frightful nights. My health is out of order; I am surprised it bears up at all.

The Comte de Clermont is at last on the Weser; I hope that this may prove our columns of Hercules. He holds Hanau and the Main. I should still flatter myself for the future if money could be had, and if I did not fear that the taking of Louisbourg would shatter our credit and influence.

In this state, my dear count, which will not change, because the government remains the same, eh! are there two courses to take? I see plainly that the Court of Vienna will not make peace, but can she maintain the war without generals and without money? The Russians will do nothing but give a pretext to the King of Prussia to seize Poland and Dantzig, from which he can draw immense supplies. Our

nation is more indignant than ever at this war. It is madly in love with the King of Prussia, because we always love those who manage their own affairs well; and it detests the Court of Vienna, because it regards it as the leech of the State, and cares very little for its aggrandizement — or for ours. This nation is enervated by luxury, spoiled by the weakness of the government, disgusted even with the license in which it is allowed to live: such are the fruits of anarchy.

Therefore, reflect seriously that we shall lose all if the war goes on, and that our shame will equal our disasters. If things are allowed to come to a certain extremity, be sure that your friends will be thrown down and torn in pieces. Therefore, act so that the Court of Vienna may keep up its side of the scales, that the balance be not entirely destroyed. A good camp before Olmütz, and another before Prague would check the King of Prussia. It is more a question now of maintaining ourselves than of conquering. I believed in our success last year because reason allowed me to believe in it; but that same reason forbids me to believe in it now. It is not imagination that will help us to judge of coming results, especially when we have none but mediocre men at the head of our armies.

You will find enclosed a letter to you from the king. He told me he had scolded you in it; but he said this laughing, and as if he were pleased with you.

Adieu; I embrace and love you; this is *au pied le la lettre* — strictly true.

The King of England refuses the neutrality of Hanover, but in a way that leads us to believe he will accept it when we march in force to re-enter that country.

XXXIX.

April 7, 1758.

Since my first letter of this date was written, my dear count, we have received a courier from Rochefort bringing news that a British squadron under Admiral Hawke has anchored off the island of Aix. Our letters from Languedoc and our news from England both assure us of a squadron in the Mediterranean which intends to make a descent on Cette. Our religionaries are expecting this and are making many movements in consequence. We shall have to send troops and money there, and that money (which must be sent immediately) thwarts and breaks up other measures — first point. This squadron will probably be followed by another bringing troops to land — second point, which deserves all attention. Add to this the uncertainty of keeping Louisbourg, and the blow that its loss would give to the public credit.

This network of untoward circumstances, joined to the expense occasioned by the total dilapidation of our army, absorbs our resources in a time so critical for our allies and for ourselves. What can we do better than share with them what remains in the common purse? It is in this manner that the question should be presented to the Court of Vienna; in friendly conversation, rather than by new proposals which would startle it and make it believe either that the basis is changed, or that we are trying to get the better of it. Let the Court of Vienna choose to pay half of the new subsidies, or charge us to pay them. In the latter case it must expect, as we cannot pay all, that we shall be in arrears on the subsidy by a dozen millions of florins. But we will pay as much as is possible and with good faith. The king is pillaged everywhere. What costs twenty sous to others costs

him a crown. The machine of government must be made over; but this is not the moment to do it, when it is off the track.

Madame Infanta is in despair; but it is better to save the kingdom than to pursue chimeras. I spoke plain French to M. de Staremberg; he spoke to me like an honest man, but *only from himself.* He feels the necessity of making even a bad peace rather than lose everything. When means are lacking, it is better to make bad arrangements than let ourselves both be destroyed. If the Court of Vienna would adopt the idea of peace, *we could make use of Spain, Denmark, and Holland as mediators — the proposition coming from them, and not from us. It would be necessary to reserve to the king and to Sweden the rôle of sureties.*

In a word, as soon as you are assured of the consent of the Court of Vienna we will settle on a plan, and I will make my preparations in advance. This is becoming very serious, my dear count, because our enemies are gaining too much ground, because they are well led, and because there is no one here to lead us at all. They are not willing to feel the necessity of giving to one person both authority and confidence. This has lost all, and will lose all in the future.

XL.

April 16, 1758.

I reply to-day, Monsieur le comte, to only a few points of your despatch of the 8th. I have still two couriers of yours whom I will return successively. You will find the observations that I thought proper to add to my despatch on the expedition to Frankfort, in order that you may fully feel the objections to that enterprise, which our generals judge essential. We ought at least to know what we do before undertaking it. That diminishes the after annoyances.

We have found some resources of money, but not enough to carry us to the end of the summer. The re-forming of the army and the restoration of our forts cost enormously; those two items cover the whole in a general way.

The Comte de Clermont has been seriously ill; I think his mind is affected by it. Could you imagine that, because the empress has taken from him six battalions, and wants six more for her army in Bohemia, he does not think himself safe behind the Rhine and talks of abandoning Wesel and Düsseldorf, regarding them as places to be captured in a week. My head gave way when I got that news. They have sent him Montazet with a letter from the king giving him positive orders to defend the Rhine, Wesel, and Düsseldorf. From this fact, disabuse yourself of the idea you have that the retreat from Hanover was arranged before the prince left here. Crémille was always in favour of falling back; his advice made an impression. Hoya was surprised by chance, and all heads were turned. There 's the true history. Ignorance and haste did the rest.

Our soldiers are exhausted by fatigue, but their will is good; our officers are worth nothing, and will do nothing except return to France. The public is of their opinion; the government, which is too feeble, which might be said not to exist, is acting in good faith, but knows neither how to foresee, nor how to remedy, nor how to impose its will. In any case, one does not rise in a single day from so heavy a fall as that retreat. With money, we may have in three months sufficient countenance to influence a peace. But meanwhile the Court of Vienna may be crushed, and the Swedes,who are no better commanded than others, are not profiting by a good moment to scatter the few Prussians who are now before them. If you will believe me, get the Danube provisioned for all contingencies.

I have charged Montazet to write the truth, and if the Comte de Clermont is not in a condition to serve, to urge him to ask for his retirement. They would then send Maréchal d'Estrées; crowning absurdity! and so return to the point of departure. But what else can they do? Where find generals? And why not change them when they dishonour the nation either by their own blunders or by those they allow others to commit? They no longer suspect us in Vienna, they despise us; and they have reason to do so. Nothing is wanting, however, to give us the esteem of that Court and even its respect but a good government. But that is totally lacking to us, and will continue to be so.

In all this, my dear count, there are but two points to consider. We have, on both sides, neither generals nor money. I am, Monsieur le comte, too sure of our military unfitness, too certain that the government will continue to go the same gait, to embark on all the horrors of a total overthrow. There was a moment, eight days ago, when France was on the point of being bankrupt for twelve millions in letters of exchange from the navy, which, it was thought, must be protested. So long as we draw money from the kingdom, so long as we drain it out of the kingdom and have not the courage to make scoundrels disgorge it, or cease to make useless expenditures and cut off those that are superfluous, we are weakening the State, unnerving it, and leading it to the grave, like a sick man bled four times a day without giving him his broth.

That is what they ought to do and that is what they will not do. I have broken all windows; I have told the strongest truths. Nothing remains for me but to die of grief, or retire. But I do not wish that my retirement should have the look of a flight, like that from Hanover.

Sometimes I wish that you were here. You have ardour; but I notice that when your ardour has been spent in vain,

you toss your hat in the air and laugh. I try to do the same, but my laugh is only at the tips of my teeth. I cannot accustom myself to dishonour. You will tell me that it is better to expose one's self to perish than be reduced to crawl on all fours. I agree, if one could perish in fighting courageously. But can any one wish to perish with everything sliding from under him? That is why I prefer to still exist, because, at least, while existence lasts there is hope for the future. But I do not think I shall ever be caught again proposing great ideas to this country. I have been misled by the hope that all could be secured by one campaign. They would not have it so. To-day I see no sensible course but that of quitting the open sea and coming ashore.

You see, my dear count, that I am like those who turn the dagger in the wound. But to whom but you could I open my heart?

Mme. de Pompadour sups with me to-night. People have begun to call it a reconciliation! I have no time to re-read my letter; decipher it if you can.

XLI.

April 21, 1758.

You can well believe, my dear count, that it is very pleasing to me to owe to you my good fortune and the greatest security against all events. Yours does not depend on me, and I should easily be jealous that Mme. de Pompadour takes charge of it if I were not equally her friend. I certainly never expected that the king would adopt with such good grace the idea you have had for me. Without you, I should never have been a cardinal, because I should never have asked to be one, and no one would have sought me out for it. I made myself a system on this point, which has succeeded well. Nevertheless, it is good to have a friend so warm,

so active, so intelligent as you. Our friend told me I must be careful at the present moment lest the king should take umbrage at my elevation. In the first place, people have said for a long time, in order to injure me, that I should be prime-minister, so that if this idea made an impression on the king all would be over for me. On the other hand, the king has never been more at his ease with me than since that first explanation about the hat and since the consent which he gave to my promotion. As for Mme. de Pompadour, she is enchanted with the thing and with the fact that it is you who have done it. The essential benefit that you can now do to me and to the service, is to make her feel how much they are deceiving her in trying to persuade her that my influence will now injure hers. Henceforth, Mme. de Pompadour cannot be injured unless by public affairs or by the death of the king. The king is young; he will not die for a long time. The question, then, is about public affairs. If they go well, she is safe, and what, therefore, can she want more than that her friend should govern them? But it is not a question here of the odious title of prime-minister. It is solely a question of the king having confidence in some one who would carry out his ideas and make others carry them out. But these things should come about little by little, and successively. It is a work of time; and, unfortunately, time presses; the honour of the nation will be lost if not speedily lifted up.

The turn which M. Kaunitz has given to the consent of the Court of Vienna to my hat is very flattering to me. There will be no difficulty about my keeping the ministry of Foreign Affairs; Cardinal Mazarin was secretary of State; so was Cardinal Dubois. I rely on you to express my respectful gratitude to their Imperial Majesties and to their ministers. If I have directly and personally anything to do

or write on this subject please inform me. The Spanish Ambassador is full of joy; he assures me of the consent of his Court on the same conditions as those of Vienna. I have written M. d'Aubeterre to find some one to write to Cardinal Porto-Carrero, in order that he may speak to the pope on this subject in the name of the King of Spain, so as not to lose time. I shall write nothing to the Bishop of Laon [ambassador to Rome] until the consent of Spain is received, and I shall await your orders before thanking the pope and his ministers. The secret will be kept here until the promotion. I have asked permission to speak of it to Mme. Infanta, but I have not yet obtained it. Mme. de Pompadour wished it were possible to announce it before the promotion. I do not know whether that is practicable, nor whether it is proper to ask it. It is for you to conduct the whole affair.

With regard to the Abbé de Canillac, M. Rouillé had taken some steps for him for the purpose of barring the way to the hat to me. This is what gave rise to the affair of the Abbé d'Elvincourt, who did a thoughtless thing, for which he was reprimanded. The king will not oppose the promotion of the Abbé de Canillac, but he has never been willing to solicit the consent of the Courts of Vienna and Spain on his behalf. With regard to your brother, I think as the Bishop of Orléans does, that he should take the first vacant bishopric, provided it is an honest one. That will be a bridge to the next great see that becomes vacant.

The Chevalier Courten pities you with all his heart, which was wrung with mine yesterday at the shame of the nation, and the wretchedness of our generals. Our soldiers have good-will, but our officers are unworthy to serve. They are all sighing after repose, idleness, and money. Maréchal de Belleisle is not well. It seems as if heaven were against

us. But at least, we have money for some months. Parliament lends itself. Since the late settlement one hundred and fifteen millions have been enregistered. Where should we be without it? I shall answer your second private letter immediately.

XLII.

April 21, 1758.

My last despatches will have explained to you fully, Monsieur le comte, our internal situation. There is enough money in the kingdom, but there is no confidence; every one fears a general bankruptcy. Moreover, we are dependent on Montmartel to the extent of his always being able to force our hand. I satisfy his vanity. I cultivate him, I encourage him; I lead in this respect a life which can be justified only by the service of the king and the good of the alliance. In spite of this, I am never sure of my subsidies. I think we have enough for the present campaign, but how support the next, especially if misfortunes happen on sea and land, as may be counted on? So much for the finances; what remedy can we find in six months with the same men in charge?

As for the army, the Comte de Clermont vegetates completely. He is governed, without being aware of it, by the true or false terrors of his staff, who want with all their strength to get back to Paris and fight the war at home. Maréchal de Belleisle will not be firm enough, and he will exhaust himself within the next two months in trying to do at one and the same time the business of minister, general, and head-clerk. That is his defect; he is seventy-four years old and will not change. So, how are we to make war without a general? They could replace Maréchal d'Estrées; I should approve of it, though we have experienced his liability to be taken in, and the little vigour he has in keeping

things in order and discipline. So much for the military side. It almost needs smelting over to get any good from it. They have, in a way, doubled the pay of the soldier. He will only be more insolent and more cowardly if he has no confidence in his leaders, or if he is corrupted by their example.

To reform all this is not the work of a moment. That work must begin by making the king respected in his Court, in order that his lieutenants in the provinces and at the head of his armies may be respected. That is where reform must begin. Our friends and allies are about as we are, so far as respect and obedience go. The cart is badly horsed, and our enemy grows bold, less manageable and more dangerous daily. It is for diplomacy to put curb and bridle on him. In the field we and our allies are too badly tooled to conquer him.

Thus peace is the last resource. But peace becomes more difficult since the signing of the convention in London on the 11th of this month between their Britannic and Prussian Majesties. The Elector of Hanover, in agreeing to make no truce, either by sea or land, without the consent of the King of Prussia, puts himself virtually under him. Apparently, secret articles have promised him the secularization of some bishopric to indemnify him. Our negotiation for the electorate of Hanover is therefore hampered. If we were vigorous and well-governed, I could find a remedy for this by acting with energy; but our government is worthless; they undo with one hand what they do with the other. There is no general system, nothing concerted, no foresight, no expenditures made appropriately, still less with economy; little money, little credit, and a deplorable army. What remains, then, but to make peace?

You ask me if you must wait for some disaster in Bohe-

mia before speaking to the Court of Vienna; this would be the best plan, so as not to displease it. But after a disaster what resources shall we have to make the enemy listen to us? I think, therefore, it would be best to take at once as your text: What will have to be done if the empress is beaten in Bohemia and Moravia? and make it felt that the resolution must be taken and the plan made before the event. The king does not wish to abandon the cause, and never will wish it, but this cannot prevent its abandonment when resources fail. You are on the spot; it is for you to give this question form; the king leaves you master of so doing. But do not let yourself be influenced by the false security of the country you are in, nor by hopes founded on the miracles of the past.

The cards are jumbled in Poland. I wish I could find a man of weight and also of good sense to send there. I do not know of one. Du Mesnil came into my head, as a special commissioner and agent rather than as minister. He has a conciliatory spirit of a kind which might please the Russians and Poles. But I fear he has not a good reputation. Give me your opinion on this, and point out to me yourself some one you think suitable. I have searched in vain. I find only apprentices and second-rate men.

Part of our convention, that on the matter of forage and some other points, is found to be intolerable from the excessive expense it involves. It will cost more for thirty thousand men than it did for a hundred thousand in the last war. They will send you the estimates.

If the Comte de Clermont remains at the head of the army, he will have great need of Montazet to guide him and be his quartermaster-general. I think this is the only way to prop the prince's weakness. On the other hand, as M. de Soubise will not make Montazet quartermaster-general of his army, he is of no particular use to him. I cannot understand how

M. de Soubise can prefer that little de Vaux to Montazet, who has real talent.

I shall never recover from the shame we have been made to bear without firing a gun and always at eight leagues from the enemy! I composed the letter which the king wrote to the Comte de Clermont to prevent his leaving the Rhine, where, incredible thing! he did not think himself in safety. The letter was firm and decided. But there is no use in being strong at one moment; one must be strong steadily and at all points. What can be done to bring this about? My only hope — which is the mere sentiment of a woman or child — is that, not having died of our shame, I may be reserved to repair it. I would that this might be and then that I might die suddenly.

Adieu, my dear count; love me still. You are certain of a friend who will never fail you, in good or bad weather.

We are just receiving letters from the army. The head grows firmer, and the plaintive, timid tone is lessening.

XLIII.

April 27, 1758.

We hold the same opinion, Monsieur le comte; I should not dream of peace if we were well-governed; I feel all the shame, and even all the danger of that arrangement; but we are in hands that are either incapable or treacherous; and as I feel that my work will be ruined without my being allowed the power to prevent it, I have recourse, out of prudence, to the only remedy that can stop a general overthrow, and, perhaps, the ruin of our friend, whom the public, if these disasters continue, will hold in horror. I do not know what means you have to find us an extra hundred millions a year; but I know that they could be had by stopping the rascalities and cheatery of all kinds that

undermine us; that sum may be regarded as uselessly wasted by the State. But I have never been able to bring about that reform. I have proposed to take upon myself the odium of the operation; I was willing to expose myself to the outcries of the Court, the city, the finance, the war, and the navy departments.[1] But those who rule those departments merely thanked me for my good intentions; and the king, who is the kindest master in the world, does not know how to say, "I will," as soon as he sees that to fulfil his will would give pain to any one.

In this position must we expose ourselves to inevitable evils, and certain shame? That is what I am not willing to risk. The great point is to bring the Court of Vienna to wish for peace, and gain its consent to it, so that we may be masters of our action without depending on others. I feel more at my ease to-day, because I feared we might be obliged to create ill-will in taking a wise course. M. Kaunitz is wrong in thinking we want to hold them by money, and for that reason have let the arrearages accumulate. We have not paid all, because we lacked the money. One man only supplies it; and he will only employ the means he knows, and on which he gains his profit. If we were to get rid of that man without having taken measures long in advance, bankruptcy would follow; he has been made too necessary. It is the same with his brother. All the sub-orders for supplies depend on those two men. Choose whom we will, he must be at their orders, and all would be ruined if we tried to do without them. I found on entering office all the vices of government accumulated; such evils cannot be remedied except by time, and under circumstances less tempestuous.

[1] Bernis was about to state his plan for doing this when his Memoir, as we have seen, came abruptly to an end. — TR.

You have done miracles in bringing the Court of Vienna to sacrifices of money, and also to the sacrifice of her pride. I feel more than any one the merit of your conduct, and your services. The gratitude I owe you has no part in my feeble approbation.

The king has felt the motives which led their Imperial Majesties to consent to my promotion. You will have received by my last courier the consent of the king; we are now awaiting that of Madrid.

Good God! what spiritless generals we have! what a spiritless nation we have become! how little attention is paid to the decadence of courage, of honour, in France! Honest men who have courage ought to band indefatigably together to inspirit heads and correct hearts; without that all is lost forever.

Adieu, my dear count. I have taken medicine to-day to prepare me to receive with intrepidity the bad news I am daily expecting from Bohemia. M. de Montmartel puts me off, day after day, for the promised payment. I am ashamed of promising, and forever begging-off about that which I cannot get. But it cannot now be delayed more than twenty-four hours.

XLIV.

May 1, 1758. — *What an epoch!*

The Archbishop of Toulouse is dead, my dear count, and I have asked for the place very eagerly for your brother; or, if the Archbishop of Alby should be appointed, then the archbishopric of Alby for the Abbé de Choiseul.

I am dying ten deaths a day. Finances are going very ill. The expenditures are no better made. Rascality and ignorance in the purchases are the same as ever. I fear some public scandal. They reassure me one day, and alarm

me the next. I do not know on what to rely, because the operations are made by men who answer for them in the morning, and will not answer for them by night. Frosts have begun again; there is much fear for the crops. The navy has gone to nothing. All arrangements are ill-made, nothing has been concerted. All is behindhand, and great expenditures are wasted because they are not made at the right time. There is the naked picture. The remedy will come too late. We are ill-governed. They will seek everywhere for the means of getting out of our troubles; that means does not exist except in better government. Day by day my prophecies are accomplished; but for all that, I cannot acquire the right to remedy the evil at once. If I could die, or go mad, it would have happened before now. We have need of continual successes to sustain us — can we hope for them? A single reverse has overthrown us, because the machine was supported only by the favours of fortune. With money we might still pull out of the affair. But money is like dew from heaven; we await it, without seeking it where it is, without striking the great strokes that make it circulate, without stirring the hearts of the nation, who would throw it to us out of their windows for the service of the king, if they were made to see it so.

However, one must not lose courage, nor the thread of affairs. But I would buy peace with an arm and a leg if it could be had within three months. There 's gloom enough. — We are watching over your interests. Keep your health. I prop mine with wise reflections and a strict diet. I love you; I am attached to you with all my heart, for life.

XLV.

May 6, 1758.

M. de Staremberg, my dear count, has received a despatch from his Court with the details of the conference that was held on the four points which you proposed to the empress.

It seems to me that she has more courage than we have; and that she is in no way convinced of the distress we are in on the financial side, inasmuch as she insists on the payment of the arrearages between now and the first of June. As we are daily put to expedients for our army, for our subsidies, for our navy, I can only promise her to make fresh efforts with the controller-general for the payment of the said arrearages; but I cannot give her any hope of succeeding, for it is, in fact, impossible. All that we can do is to pay, when we can, what is due; and should money come to us, to pay it on account; but be very sure that it is as impossible to pay five millions of florins in one payment now, as it would be to take the moon in our teeth.

M. de Staremberg seemed desirous of arranging with me the other points, this one being set aside. I let drop the following proposition: that it was much better that you should finish those matters because you began them. I saw that they thought they could get better terms out of me than out of you; but it would be useless for me to consent when I could not pay more. We are stopped by an insurmountable obstacle, namely: *impossibility*. You know that in my opinion that impossibility would not be real, *if* the only measures there are to take were taken, namely: retrench the hundred millions that are now squandered uselessly in the kingdom. But such vigorous action will not be taken; hence we must face our poverty, and risk our own ruin and that of our allies.

I see that the Court of Vienna has not lost the hope of a fine campaign.[1] If I had the means of making three others I should think the same. But no angel has revealed to me that the King of Prussia will be beaten, nor that the English will not seize our colonies; and perhaps Minorca, from which we have withdrawn M. de Lannion to send him to the Prince de Soubise at the very moment when England is embarking seventeen thousand men with artillery and an escort of twenty-four ships of the line! The rumours are that they are going to Flanders, to Lorient, to Normandy, to Rochefort, to Languedoc. Why not to Minorca? — where we have not relieved our troops since they landed there, and where we have only a brigadier in command, not too many provisions, no money, little ammunition, and no squadron to guard our convoys.

In a word, my dear count, all is decomposing; in vain we prop the building on one side, it crumbles on the other. However, we shall still go on if the naval bills of exchange do not drive us into bankruptcy. I have represented with the utmost strength the necessity of doing with the navy department what has been done with the war department, namely: put men who understand business in charge of it. I do not know if any arguments will carry the day against the protection given to M. de Moras by the friends of M. de Séchelles. This protection is all the more misplaced and imprudent because, if there is a means of doing good to M. de Moras and of preventing him from being buried under the ruins of his department, it is to advise him to quit it. I do

[1] Maria Theresa was not altogether mistaken; witness the victory of Maréchal Daun at Hochkirchen October 14, 1758; the annihilation of the Prussian army by Loudon and Soltikoff at Kunersdorf August 12, 1759; the surrender of the Prussian army at Maxen, November 21, 1759. See the Prince de Ligne's account of the Seven Years' War, in this Historical Series. — Tr.

not know what will come of this, but at any rate I have nothing to reproach myself with. They will tax me with wanting to govern everything because I ask that the best informed and most superior men shall be placed in each department. Ordinarily men seek to reign by choosing comrades who are weaker than themselves. May God enlighten us! we are drowning, without trying to avoid it while there is yet time.

You will find herewith the letter of M. Wall. The King of Spain has not put less grace into his consent than did the Court of Vienna, and he despatched a courier at once to convey it to the king. The ambassador from Spain and M. de Staremberg have both said to me that the pope ought to put the same good grace into the affair by appointing me singly and before the promotion. These gentlemen even said that this method would be more agreeable to their Courts as well as more courteous to the king. I tell you their reflections, which it is not my place to combat, and I think you ought to support them. In point of fact no one knows when the promotion will be made, — the pope is very old, — and I think when I am cardinal, my red hat will give more weight to my arguments. Unconsciously, dignities have that effect.

The Archbishop of Alby is not yet decided on for Toulouse; but I think your brother's affairs are in a good way; I have already put aside some little obstacles. You can count on my friendship and vigilance, as I have good reasons to count on yours. I am expecting your courier hourly; but as I have pressing letters for the North I shall despatch this one immediately.

Maréchal de Belleisle is better. But Gayot, commissary-general of the army, whom the Comte de Clermont sends back, is very angry with Duverney, and Duverney denounces his brother; and the subalterns who depend upon them

threaten to leave them, and then all the fat is in the fire. It is better to row the galleys than be in charge of affairs at a time when anybody is allowed to do anything and everything. Nevertheless, I feel pretty well; and I gather strength from falls, like that giant in the fable, whose name I forget.

Adieu, my dear count; you see by the way I write to you that I love you truly, and esteem you as much as I love you.

I have given such precise orders in Poland, and have written so categorically to the Comte de Brühl, that I do not despair of getting a little light into the chaos of internal squabbles that have been sown in that country, and of reducing all to the system of favouring the Russian operations and reconciling the great general [Branicki] with the prime-minister of Saxony. This mere line will put you as much *au fait* as a long despatch.

Get my affair finished in Rome; because, if it comes to be known, I shall be exposed to all the defamation in the world; and how can I keep it secret if it drags on?

XLVI.

May 13, 1758.

We are not lucky, my dear count, neither you nor I. I think, however, that you will be satisfied with the king, who will write to you and promise you what you most desire. It has not been possible to give the archbishopric of Toulouse to your brother. I inclose a letter from the Bishop of Orléans on that subject. The Abbé de Choiseul must accept Évreux; meanwhile they are negotiating the translation of the Bishop of Toul to Évreux. The great point is to make the Abbé de Choiseul a bishop. The king has promised not to let him languish long in a little see. The Bishop of Orléans has also given me the same promise.

Thus youf brother is now to be appointed to Évreux, but as the pope has died it may be a long time before he gets his bulls; in the interval some better bishopric or archbishopric may become vacant. Mme. de Pompadour and I were consumed with grief at losing Toulouse; but considerations for the Archbishop of Narbonne and the commandant of the province carried the day. When a government is feeble it is afraid of its shadow.

M. Dumont [minister at Dantzig], having received your letter on the occupation of Dantzig by the Russians, ought not to have awaited his orders of the 15th of April, which could not possibly reach him till the last of that month. I have sent him a power in conformity with that which the empress has given to M. de Rolle, and I washed his head of the self-importance of not concurring *sub spe rati;* meanwhile they will write to Russia that our minister is keeping aloof!

I do not think that M. de Courten would consent to go to Poland. I have long been sounding him on this subject; he seems to me averse to it.

As for the Chevalier Chauvelin, he would be very suitable; but after what has passed on the subject of the Prince de Conti, I cannot doubt that Chauvelin himself would be embarrassed in presence of a prince who suspects nothing and would create suspicions about us everywhere. I am inclined to send M. de Monteil to Warsaw; I can count upon him for a special mission. He has intelligence, is very well-informed, very firm, and a very honest man; he is incapable of making a system of his own. If he succeeds down there we can leave him where he is. I do not know any one better informed on general affairs, and who joins to that some military knowledge. He is slightly related to me and to my friends. Mme. de Pompadour takes an interest

in him. Here are several claims and motives united to make us feel sure about his conduct.

The pope is dead; there's my castle in the air blown down. As soon as I saw that my nomination would have to be deferred, I no longer counted on it. But be sure that I shall never forget what you have done for me on this occasion. It is disagreeable, after the noise that this affair will not fail to make (the secret being in the hands of at least a dozen persons), that I should be left in the lurch. Fortune never played me a more cruel trick. But be sure that this misfortune does not take hold on me like the public affairs. I never looked to being a cardinal, and I can console myself for not being one. The king was delighted that the pope named me *proprio motu*, but he may perhaps have a scruple in proposing me to his successor. I shall not ask it; and unless that successor, whoever he may be, does not feel that he would do well to carry out, in this respect, the wishes of the Courts of France, Vienna, and Spain, I do not see any help for it. I can be easily consoled for myself, but it is a misfortune for public affairs. The dignity would have given me more influence, authority, and success. The result is that I shall take the course of retiring. Believe me, without peace we shall perish, and perish dishonoured.

They want to keep M. de Moras in the Navy department, as if it were of no consequence whether that service were well or ill administered. In a word, it is a mere childish will that directs our principles of government. This is unendurable to one who loves the State and values his own reputation. But do not be afraid that I shall decamp as yet. I have a virtuous spirit, and I am brave. But, I repeat to you, we stand in need of peace because all our affairs are in disorder, and money is lacking. I obtain some

on my personal credit for public affairs. Will you believe that for the total costs of the ministry of Foreign Affairs I have received during the past year only thirty-two millions? You know that the subsidy to Vienna alone is thirty millions; thus I have had for the other subsidies, the expenses of ambassadors, ministers, pensions, presents, etc. only two millions of francs. That is why I now owe nine millions to the Court of Vienna. How can I sustain the king and keep his pledges with such resources? Crushed on one side by the military, thwarted by the bad administration of the other departments, and badly paid, I regard it as a miracle that I have held together in my hands all the branches of the system.

But there comes an end to all things. You are too much my friend to advise me to my shame and personal disaster. In all this there is no temper, nor chagrined ambition, nor disgust, nor weakness. I see that I cannot do good, and I am not fitted to do evil, nor to endure it. Draw your conclusions. I repeat once more, do not think that I am putting either misplaced fear or precipitation into my conduct. I am making, and I shall make, use of the reason that God has given me.

The king has had a little sciatica, or it may be gout, in the knee. He is well, and in no way troubled with our anxieties, nor embarrassed by our embarrassments. In one sense, this is very fortunate, for we should be still more pitiable if he saw things gloomily or was out of temper. Do not be vexed, yourself, about the bishopric of Toulouse. You will soon be, you and your brother, compensated.

You will find enclosed my letters of thanks to Counts Kaunitz and Colloredo. The king permits me to write them, and also to thank M. Wall and Cardinal Archinto.

What a misfortune that you are not in Rome at this

juncture! However, provided no one drives us to frenzy, we shall come safely through it, and, considering all things, the Courts being now united, they will prevent the new pope from troubling our interior. The king regrets Pope Benedict, and with good reason. I expect hourly a letter from you, and my heart beats in awaiting it. Send by courier the enclosed letters for Warsaw and Saint-Petersburg. Here is also a letter from Madame la dauphine for her father.

Prince Xavier is to come here and serve in the main army.

XLVII.

May 16, 1758.

I send you, my dear count, the letter of the Bishop of Orléans and several others which will give you pleasure; I offer you no congratulations on the bishopric of Évreux; it is only a stepping-stone.

I profit by a courier of M. de Staremberg to send you the treaty with Denmark, signed at Copenhagen, May 4, which you will communicate to the ministry at Vienna and claim the adhesion of that Court to the said treaty.

It is grievous that the king should be obliged to give six millions to make sure of Denmark at a time when he has such need of money for himself and his allies. But this is not buying too dear the certainty that Denmark will in no case take sides with our enemies, and will itself aid in the destruction of the King of Prussia if that prince meets with a reverse. After all, one cannot blame the Court of Copenhagen for behaving prudently, considering the few resources she has to support a war. The convention with Sweden is also signed. That is another six millions for this year. Let any one cite examples of greater efforts than those France is making for the common cause. But on both sides we lack generals such as we had in the olden time.

I can add nothing, Monsieur le comte, to my tender attachment to you.

We are very anxious to see the development of the plan of the King of Prussia. It is not doubtful that he has one. He has had time to study it this winter.

XLVIII.

May 24, 1758.

Secret news, my dear count, from London inform us that M. Wall [Richard Wall, Spanish prime-minister, an Irishman, at one time ambassador to England] is completely given over to the King of England; he gives him advice, and reassures him about the arming of Spain and the offers she may make of her mediation. I have difficulty in believing a thing so extraordinary. Nevertheless, I have told the Spanish ambassador that he ought to inquire whether among the secretaries in Madrid one of them is not sold to the English. He will not fail to inform M. Wall, and if, as I dare not believe, that minister is the guilty person, on finding himself discovered he will surely make serious reflections. This matter is so delicate to handle, and at the same time so important, that it is best to concert with Count Kaunitz on the method of our behaviour about it. Personally, I have every reason to be satisfied with M. Wall, and I assure you that I think him quite incapable of such treachery; but it is certainly extraordinary that facts and circumstances are quoted which fit in well with others. Talk about this with Count Kaunitz, in order that we may act in concert either for saying and doing, or for holding our tongues and believing the matter false.

Thank God! M. de Moras has made up his mind to retire. M. de Massiac and M. le Normand will be to the navy what M. de Belleisle and M. de Crémille are to the war depart-

ment. I do not know either. The first is thought an honest man; he has experience. The latter is a man of intelligence, rather shrewd and a little too much given to pen-work, from which he comes. But the two are friends and both understand business.

The affair of Maillebois, who has just been arrested and taken to the fortress of Doullens, is a stroke of authority which does credit to the ministry of Maréchal de Belleisle. Three or four such examples, wisely placed, would re-establish respect and authority.

You will do well to keep up a correspondence with Cardinal Archinto and your friend Spinelli. But in order to serve the king well at this juncture, you must enlighten the Bishop of Laon [French ambassador to Rome] at the same time, so as not to conflict measures and spoil the work for want of concert. You will feel even more than I do how true the principle is that we should give our confidence to those we employ or else dismiss them. If they are too weak or too unobserving we must enlighten and prop them; but it is a great risk to work without them; if we do, it is impossible that difficulties should not arise. Besides, the king has great confidence in the Bishop of Laon, and that was why, without giving any details, I wrote to the Bishop privately of the kind intentions the pope had for me, to which the king and the Courts of Vienna and Madrid had consented. The king allowed me to do this. It would have been humiliating to his Majesty's ambassador to learn this fact from the public, because, being in the hands of so many persons, the secret could not long remain secret. It has not transpired here as yet. As I think no more about it I have said nothing; and if others do the same it will not be known for a long time. It is for you to do the best you can in this affair, which I place in your hands and those of

Cardinal Archinto. It will be difficult that in one way or another I should not be cardinal after all that has taken place. But I assure you that if I lose that dignity I can easily console myself.

Our shame, and the risk of our approaching destruction are the only things that affect me. Every day we are on the brink of bankruptcy; Montmartel holds us in dependency upon him, and his health is not good. All our financiers are also dependent upon him. None dare to bind themselves to any transaction without his consent; no one has sufficient credit to evade him, or to take his place; therefore we are forced to do the best we can with him. The king, who is doing a very great thing for his son, ought to speak to him kindly and firmly. That might produce some results. But the fact is, Montmartel is embarrassed because he has genius for none but the operations on which he gains; he is incapable of great strokes; witness the affair of the annuities last year, which was to have produced sixty millions, and barely brought in two. That miscalculation was serious, and created a void that was hard to fill. The same operation this year has not yet produced a sou, but it is reckoned at forty-six millions. On the other hand, the war mounts up one hundred and thirty millions, Foreign Affairs to fifty-two, the navy to sixty; add to that the king's household, pensions, and State expenses, and you will be less astonished at the distress in which we are. That distress would not last, however, if we had a genius who would restore confidence, and bring out the circulation of money. But where is he, that genius? And when we see him, shall we give him the necessary power?

Our folly is to try to do great things with little minds and little means. I shall know by the end of the week on what to rely for money, and I will send you a courier. But,

I repeat to you, if we get through this year, do not expect it to be possible that we can meet these costs another year — unless some great success, or some great men should come to our succour, of which there is no likelihood.

There is a word in your private letter which gives me much to think about. When one has allies, one must run the risk of being deceived and forestalled, or bear the blame and danger of forestalling them. I prefer the first course to the second, and I think the method we have followed is a good one, namely: to urge our allies to end a war which neither of us can sustain any longer, and which is not leading us to our end. If, however, you have any certain notions of a tortuous course, you must warn us instantly, and not lose a minute. If the finances sustained me, I would be master of our allies; but betrayed and dishonoured by the military, and ill-supported by the finances, it is difficult for me not to depend upon them; unless, through their misfortunes putting us all on the same level, we should both have but one resource, — that of standing united on the brink of the precipice.

Reflecting on the position of Vienna, I do not think it likely that their Imperial Majesties will abandon it; a bridge across the Danube is not thrown in a day. I fear, as you do, only the siege of Olmütz. The whole question reduces itself to knowing whether that place can hold out long; if it can, then so much the better that the King of Prussia should be so eager to besiege it. His rear could easily be cut or harassed. The King of Prussia is, as I believe, trying by all sorts of wiles to draw Maréchal Daun into a battle, and with that view he may enter Bohemia by way of Moravia. A plan well conducted would embarrass him.

Montazet starts Saturday for Vienna. We hope that, he

LE MARECHAL
DE BELL-ISLE.

Mau

being a general officer, the empress will do him the honour to have him admitted to the military councils of Maréchal Daun, as he was last year. Besides, the Russian officer was admitted, and they would not treat a Frenchman of merit, courage, and experience less well than they treated him. Montazet will tell you on what sort of rack I am bound night and day, unable to obtain anything until at extremities, and then too late; foreseeing, unhappily too correctly, evils which I am unable to remedy until at the last gasp. Still, I go on; my head is bad, and I am a worthy descendant of the giant Antæus, whose name you were kind enough to give me. There is a rumour in Paris that you and I have quarrelled. They have long tried to make me believe that you no longer love me. I forget such things as soon as they are said to me; we are made, you and I, to love and esteem each other. It costs me nothing to do you justice; I do it on the first impulse, and need no reflection.

M. de Broglie is to serve in the main army or not at all. Madame la dauphine has been worth to him a pension of ten thousand francs. I think he ought to be content, if he can ever be so. But, in any case, the time for sparing people is passed; he can frighten neither Maréchal de Belleisle nor me. Adieu, my dear count; my hand aches.

When the Roman republic was in difficulties, it appointed a dictator. We are not a Roman republic, my dear count, but we have great need of acting as one.

XLIX.

May 25, 1758.

M. de Montazet, Monsieur le comte, will explain to you our true situation, military, financial, and internal. You can trust implicitly the details into which he will enter.

The date for the departure of the troops under M. de

Soubise is fixed for June 15 or 20. God grant that this succour arrive in time. As for our main army, I do not see how it can advance. Westphalia is now as barren as the deserts of Barca. Providence must interfere a little in our affairs; if not, there is, in truth, everything to fear. Nevertheless, it would be a pity if, through failure to make peace, we should forever deprive ourselves of the faculty of playing a great part in the world.

I recommend to you M. de Montazet, who has been my friend for the last twenty-five years. I know no one who is more frankly a good servant to the king than he. I do not imagine they will refuse to admit him to the council of war. He obtained the right to be present during the last campaign.

L.

May 30, 1758.

A rumour is current here, Monsieur le comte, since morning, that an affair has taken place in Moravia which turned out unfortunately for the Austrians. Letters from Nuremberg mention it. They say the King of Prussia was wounded in the arm, and Maréchal Daun killed. The date of these letters gives reason to doubt of the truth of this bad news, which would certainly have been announced to us by courier before now. In spite of this reasonable reflection, I am anxious, because in these days all misfortunes are likely, and we are but too well used to them. My health is rather out of order; for this reason you will only have these few lines to-day.

LI.

May 30, 1758.

I have this instant received yours, my dear count, of the 24th, just as my courier was starting. I can only thank

you for what you have again done for me; and assure you that if you made me king of the world my friendship for you could not increase.

LII.

June 4, 1758.

I have received, Monsieur le comte, your despatch of the 26th. In it you mention a paper in cipher, which must have been omitted from the package by one of your secretaries.

You are informed by this time of the march of Prince Henry of Prussia into Franconia. He arrived in person at Bayreuth on the 26th with a heavy detachment. The whole Empire trembles. Complaints will surely be made that the army of the Empire has retired into Bohemia, while those of our allies of the Empire are exposed and perhaps oppressed. In France we shall complain that Alsace is left exposed to the inroads of the enemy. All these complaints are well-founded; but the king, ever faithful to his promises, will send the thirty thousand men under M. de Soubise on the dates indicated. They will follow the Danube, and march in strong divisions. The cost will be great, but everything yields to the duty of keeping his word to his first and chief ally. They need not fear in Vienna that we now think of peace. We are thinking only of getting money enough to continue the war as long as our enemies lay down the law to us. We feel that peace must not be bought nor begged, and in this we think openly and honestly.

I have paid attention to your despatch of the 26th. I have seen such moments; but in my heart, I will never believe that which I ought not to believe. You will have news from me by a courier whom I shall despatch two days hence. You know, Monsieur le comte, my tender attachment to you.

LIII.

June 6, 1758.

My dear count, this letter is for yourself only, and you must burn it. We have come to the last point of decadence. Montmartel's head and Boullongne's have turned. They cannot raise a sou. Their operations have failed. The shame of our army has reached its height. The enemy has crossed the Rhine at Emerich with six thousand men, seven leagues from the Comte de Clermont. They constructed a bridge without our general being aware of it. The Dutch surely furnished the boats, and will furnish them, no doubt, with the necessary stores. M. de Villemeur, with twelve thousand men contented himself with firing upon them and then retiring to Clèves, where the Comte de Clermont assembles his army. There is every appearance that the Hanoverian army (which is, nevertheless, separated from the Hessians and therefore very weak) has crossed the Rhine.

This is a bold stroke; and if we were other men than we are, they could be destroyed either by marching upon them or by crossing to the other side of the Rhine. God will decide. The Comte de Clermont assures us positively that he shall fight them.

But, Monsieur le comte, do you not see the frightful result of all this? We have no government. My representations are useless. They make a mere passing impression. The public abhors the system because it abhors the war. The military think the same. I am threatened in anonymous letters with being torn in pieces by the people, and though I do not fear such threats, it is certain that the coming disasters, which we must foresee, may easily realize these threats. *Our friend runs at least the same danger.*

I have seen all this, my dear count, since the month of November. I have seen the little trust we can put in the army. I have seen an underground conspiracy forming itself in all the orders of the State against the present alliance and its authors. We have been betrayed on all sides. Those who have aided us in good faith have been imbeciles who could not feel the import of a great affair. You will see, in my memorial read before the Council, whether I concealed or dissimulated the truth. That is the hundredth effort I have made with the same strength. And what has all that produced? A slight shaking-up, and then, a fall back into the usual lethargy.

There is absolutely not one penny. They give me promises, and break them in two days. Half of our troops are not clothed; a part of the cavalry have no boots. The controller-general depends on Montmartel, and Montmartel is frightened. His great credit has made him enemies; these enemies conspire against him and prevent him from finding resources. Those that we propose on a grand scale frighten his routine spirit, but the controller-general feels that he cannot do without a man who absorbs in himself alone all the credit of the State and prevents others from gaining any.

Where is the remedy? There is but one. A prime-minister who is capable. But I announce to you that I will not be that man. That authority should be given to the Maréchal de Belleisle. It would degrade him to give it to another, and he would certainly quit his present place. He has confidence in me. I could be useful to him and advise him on many things. I know his defects, but he has fine qualities and a manner of action which does much. A dictator is necessary when the Republic is in danger.

Peace has never been so necessary, nor so difficult to conclude. We are now just reaching the moment to reunite

ourselves with Spain. But that reunion depends on our not perishing utterly, and on preserving our allies and our credit; in short, that all be not lost between now and December 1. There are still resources; but a *master must be had;* that truth is obvious. They will ruin the State through the false self-love that insists on keeping up equality.

I maintain this necessity to you without self-interest. I consent to work under whom they choose, provided they give me a master who knows what he is doing.

For the rest, I warn you that having struggled for two years against all obstacles I can no longer answer for my health. I shall surely not survive our shame and further disaster. What service our allies would have rendered to themselves and to us had they consented to make peace! The resolution that I made the king take at the last Council is the song of the dying swan. I feel that I shall have no more strength unless the king acquires some or gives some. Is it possible to perish utterly with eight hundred millions of money in the kingdom? Is it possible to see the navy stranded utterly, the colonies lost, after having taken Minorca from the English and beaten them at sea? There is no authority anywhere, heads are distraught; keep yours, and pity a friend who will be yours till death. God grant favour to our arms and those of the empress.

My despatch is of yesterday; this letter is of to-day. You see by that the progress of these evils and how rapidly they come from day to day.

LIV.

June 15, 1758.

It is ages, Monsieur le comte, since we have had news of you. Here is ours: the English re-embarked at Saint-Malo in all haste, after burning the suburbs, and they have gone elsewhere to burn something else. The enemy, as you know,

crossed the Rhine, collected, and marched in the direction of Venloo. The Comte de Clermont marched also, on the 12th, to cut them off. Cannon has been heard, therefore the battle is certain. The country is swampy and cut up; consequently our cavalry, which is good, can scarcely be useful. Our troops broke up their quarters without being refitted; but they have good-will. If the dispositions are well made, we shall beat the enemy. But on that point I do not feel perfect confidence. It seems that the enemy is trying to enter the Low Countries by way of Ruremonde. If that is so, we have the war in Flanders, and, supposing that we are beaten, you will see the position and the necessity of having our forces united. The Low Countries belong as much to the empress as they do to Bohemia. I give you that reflection in advance. You will feel the solidity and the importance of it.

What a crisis, great God! M. de Villemeur caused it. He let the Rhine be crossed under his very nose. In truth, our officers of high rank are incredible. Please God to succour the good cause, for the army defends it ill.

They say that the King of Prussia has been ill. Prince Xavier arrived last night and starts for the army to-morrow. The king received him very well; so did every one else. He has come at a crisis.

Send us your news. You feel what a blow will be given to our credit by the event we fear. A victory would redeem all. Without it, I see nought but confusion. We must have a disentangler-general [*débrouilleur-général*]. I have offered myself with some courage till the peace; but the offer has not been taken up. They want to be as they are. God alone can bring order into all this.

Adieu, Monsieur le comte. I was right in the month of December. Believe, however, that courage has not deserted me. I fear only for my health; for I cannot sleep.

LV.

June 22, 1758.

The despatches of the Comte de Clermont, Monsieur le comte, have thrown us into the most cruel uncertainty. He was marching on the enemy, who are at Campen, through a country where our army can neither camp nor get supplies; consequently, it must retrograde. The whole campaign is being spent in marches and counter-marches. Our army will be ruined. It is already greatly fatigued by these forced marches. The generals are divided in opinion. The whole is a wretched muddle. You will see that at Versailles they will resolve to recall the Comte de Clermont when all is lost.

I don't know how it is I still live. The king is dishonouring himself, and our system is breaking up on all sides. We pay no one, not even ourselves; and we shall soon have all Europe upon us. The army of M. de Soubise has stuck fast. But this cursèd battle that we have been expecting daily for three weeks leaves us no course to take about it. The best thing would be to march at once to the Rhine, or into Hesse, and make a powerful diversion there. But the king is seized with scruples after partly consenting. Try to get us out of this bad pass.

I give you disagreeable commissions; but you see the state to which I am reduced. I am obliged to invent chicanery about the Danish treaty, and elude ratification of it simply for want of funds. Fortunately, the difficulty I am making is not new; I have always insisted upon it. How can we possibly arrange matters with the Court of Vienna? I am promised that the empress shall have the money. But if it is sent to her we shall be left without any. Nothing but the loss of a battle could relieve us — because that

would bring the war close to us, and we shall not be expected to defend others when we have to defend ourselves.

You will see by a note which I added to my despatch (and which you will have difficulty in reading) that Russia seeks a pretext to complain in order to justify its inaction. I pity the empress; all her allies serve her ill, and we have served her worse than any of them by dishonouring and ruining ourselves. But the fact is, we must come down to the possible. We cannot give troops when we have so much to fear for ourselves. We cannot give money if nothing is left for us. I see nothing to be done but to abandon the second treaty, and return to the first. In that we cease to have obligations which we cannot fulfil, and all that we give above the estimate made for thirty thousand men will be gratuitous. We shall act then with our own men, and the thirty thousand Swedes whom we maintain.

I know how hard it will be to say that we renounce our second obligations. But M. Kaunitz has asked you the question. It is good that you have that opening. In replying, slip in this hard truth. A fortunate event may save you and ourselves from this embarrassment. But how can we expect such an event from the Comte de Clermont?

I have told our friend truths which have distressed her, and have even made her ill; but that will remedy nothing. They will not have a prime-minister, and that is the only thing that could mend matters — if indeed there is still time. At last the three useless ministers retire from the Council. M. Berryer is to enter it; he has a head for internal affairs, and he can furnish us the means to get money. We shall at least get a man of good sense. He loves our friend, and is liked in Paris. He knows how to conduct the affairs of the clergy and parliament. Besides M. Berryer, in order to make the assembly of the clergy less stormy, its president,

Cardinal de Tavannes, is to enter the Council on the same day. He will never allow a shameful peace to be made. He will concert with me; and our friend, who has confidence in him, will have more in my opinions when she finds them combined with that of the two others.

See what engines one has to employ, and under what circumstances! You are right to wish to return here. But you are certain of being made duke. Do not lose courage. As for me, I am forced to retire, whatever happens. Our system has crumbled down, and the King of Prussia would never negotiate with me. If the empress could make her peace without any stipulations in it that went against us, taking upon herself, in concert with France, to bring back Sweden, Russia, and the Empire, by means of the restitution of Saxony, the stools would not be thrown over. Otherwise, all will crumble to pieces. It is now eight months and more that I have seen this. It is a conspiracy of all parties. A prime-minister could have smothered these cabals a year ago. To-day he would find great difficulty in doing so.

As for me, I will not undertake it now. I have burned my papers, I am going to make my will; meantime I shall stay here, suffering grief and shame, until they tell me to go away. You can feel how sweet it would be to me to retire now. But they will not allow it. Yet it would be a means of covering many things, because a new minister would not feel bound to fulfil the promises of his predecessor. Look, and see what you can find for the better on this dark canvas. Providence alone can help you, for I can give you no means, because they are all taken from me at once. As I am resolved for every event, I do not lack courage. For my heart, it is yours entirely.

LVI.

June 24, 1758.

Mme. de Pompadour, my dear count, is ill with a slight fever. She has had worry, and much reason to have it. We are under the paw of Montmartel, who has wanted to grasp all, and whose head is now turned with fear, though he will not, for all that, let go of anything. M. Boullongne [controller-general], is no more than his clerk. This side of the government will ruin the rest; our dependence on him is such that, if he breaks down, all is in confusion; if he remains, we shall be ever at his mercy. How can we get out of this? There is but one means, — absolute authority confided to one man. But they will not take that means; lacking which we go by chance. On the other side, that of the war, they will not recall the Comte de Clermont, whose incapacity is proved. They await the destruction of everything before attempting to mend matters. They are dying of fear, yet are not willing to secure themselves by choosing good men.

To this are we reduced through weakness and the want of foresight. They have always, so far, pulled through troubles, and think they can continue to do so, but circumstances are not the same, and the public are furiously dissatisfied. In spite of all this, I gather courage every day for the morrow. *Give us peace at any price. Without which you risk never seeing here again your best friends;* among whom I class myself.

LVII.

June 29, 1758.

I limit myself to-day, Monsieur le comte, to the acknowledgment of your letters of the 17th and 23d. I hope that the Court of Vienna will insist on the insertion of the clause

in the treaty with Denmark that "the troops assembled in Holstein shall not, in any case, serve against the king, the empress, or their allies;" without which we might have to pay the troops against the Swedes and Russians. You know my reason for insisting on that clause. It becomes more pressing daily.

I am delighted that the empress, of her own accord, has indicated the movement on Hesse. The Comte de Clermont, having allowed, from sheer unskilfulness, his left to be beaten, and eighteen battalions crushed, together with the carbineers and twenty squadrons (who did prodigies of valour [1]), has not dared to await Prince Ferdinand at Neuss. He has retreated to Cologne, where the king has sent him an order to stop, conquer, or perish. They have sent a summons to Maréchal d'Estrées, who will arrive to-morrow. It is very cruel to let France be lost for such stupid folly. For two months and more I have urged and tormented them to recall Maréchal d'Estrées. Ridiculous embarrassments have prevented it.

We learn to-day that the English are besieging Louisbourg, where M. de Moras had assured us that all was in good order. But *I* tell you that the place cannot hold out a month; that we shall lose there six ships of war; that our navy has sunk very low; and that the kingdom was never in greater danger.[2] You will see the English end by coming into Flanders.

The army of M. de Soubise, in consequence of its diversion into Hesse, may still restore things if between now and the 8th (when it marches) the Comte de Clermont has not utterly destroyed his army. Our friend says that my head is overheated when I represent to her the necessity of taking some course on all points, or else making peace on any terms. Her

[1] Battle of Creveld, June 23. — TR.

[2] Louisbourg, chief town of Cape Breton, was taken July 27, 1758. — TR

fate is dreadful. Paris detests her and blames her for all. Not a sou can be got. I see black because I see correctly. How can you expect me to remain in my place and break my word on all my pledges. No one here sees things as they are. They rely on the past. But circumstances are no longer the same. Parties are annihilated or decomposed. I tremble for the empress. I see a frightful revolution approaching in the political world. Perhaps the excess of evil may in the end produce good — which is no other than a firm and economical government. Do not speak of me again as a leading influence. You do me wrong. I have the air of urging you and of being an ambitious man, whereas I am only a citizen and a man of good sense.

At last MM. Rouillé, Paulmy, and Moras have departed. We breathe more at ease. I do the impossible to bring M. de Puysieux back into the Council, not for his lights, but because the public detests the new ministry, and one must give it comfort and hope.

The king will be touched by the empress's sentiments. I would that he put in execution his good thoughts.

Adieu; our army is not discouraged, but still less is it amended. M. de Gisors died of his wounds; you can imagine the state of the maréchal [de Belleisle, his father]. We shall lose him, and who will replace him? This is like the end of the world. Keep well, and make the empress make peace including all our allies. What can the King of Prussia ask better than to have what he had and to restore what he has taken? Nothing can save us but that; negotiations are too long; time is pressing; without it we must play quits or double. If we take this course from a principle of courage, and conduct ourselves accordingly, it will be the best; but here they look only to chance, and do nothing to guide events.

LVIII.

July 7, 1758.

My long letters must have given you gloom enough, my dear count. I spare you more gloom in this. Act strongly to get Paulmy removed. M. de Laon wants neither an ultra Molinist nor a Jansenist. We had better be on the safe side. I do not know what course they will take here. But I do know that if they take none all is lost and we shall have no hold upon anything. I am as much disgusted with my place as you are with yours. I am dependent on everything, but nothing any longer depends on me but to tell the truth brutally. I do not spare myself on that. Adieu, my dear count; the help of Heaven alone can drag us from the abyss. Still, if we had money, I could hope. This is a very ill-written tale, but a faithful one.

LIX.

July 14, 1758.

Düsseldorf has capitulated, Monsieur le comte; the French and the Palatiners were to leave the place on the 9th. We have thrown our stores into the Rhine, but I believe we did not have time to withdraw our artillery. Prince Ferdinand has orders, they say, to march into the Low Countries. M. de Contades took command of the army on the 8th. I am not satisfied with its position, nor with the tone which prevails among the general officers. Maréchal d'Estrées will not take the command. He excuses himself on the ground that his health is not good; but the fact is, he fears the wretched pass we are in.

Money is becoming daily more scarce, and the excitement in Paris more intense. There is a committee to-day at Maréchal de Belleisle's, about which I will send you an account by courier to-morrow. The misfortune is, that our

communications with the Meuse are cut, and the taking of Düsseldorf deprives us of a part of the Rhine. The English will keep the corps of M. de Graville on our flank, and M. de Soubise in Hesse can no longer produce a diversion. His army is far more necessary nearer to ours. Such are the fruits of ineptitude, of reluctance, and lack of money, which have made everything fail because nothing has been done at the right moment.

The events in Moravia will have ruled your conduct in relation to my last despatches, and I am not anxious lest you should have hurried matters. The state of things is the same, if not worse. Thus my late reflections exist; as to the time to make use of them, that depends on circumstances and on the ultimate orders which the king may send you. You shall have a despatch to-morrow instructing you more plainly. Our resolutions are firm, our fidelity unshaken, but the king is ill-served. Take care of your health, M. le comte, and do not doubt my inviolable attachment.

LX.

July 15, 1758.

At last, my dear count, I begin to hope. M. de Contades wants to be maréchal of France. He has come out of the cul-de-sac, and is marching on Bedburg, an excellent position, which covers Cologne, makes him master of the heights of Erft, and protects Juliers. A courier has just brought us the good news. We are now out of the wizard circle of retreats. We shall also have money.

Another piece of good news: Rezzonico is pope, Archinto secretary of State. All goes well. I shall be a cardinal of your making soon. The king has permitted that favour to be asked for me, and it is, or will be, asked by Spain and the Court of Vienna. Do not say to M. Kaunitz that I

showed his note to the king. His Majesty is proud, and he thought it a little strong. Our allies ascend into the clouds very readily. As for me, I see things *as they are.*

You will find in my despatch an expedient which I suggest to you for your return here if events turn out very badly. You will not profit by it except in that single case. Mme. de Pompadour does not wish you to return till all is lost. Throw out your stepping-stones for all events. My friendship for you would suffer to see you forced to play a pitiable rôle. I have no time to say more now; on the day after to-morrow I will send you a despatch. Never hurry yourself to execute orders from here which you think would wound the Court of Vienna. It is always understood that an ambassador on the spot is to choose his time and circumstances. I will never let you be ignorant of your true position, and I will always put you in the way (knowing it well), of acting in accordance with the king's intentions, and with circumstances which cannot always be divined, but which ought to change something in our language and demeanour.

LXI.

July 21, 1758.

Montmartel has just experienced the bankruptcy of his cashier, my dear count, which retards the payment of the subsidy. This incident has been kept secret, for fear it might lead to consequences. You could scarcely depict to yourself the narrow straits to which the finance department is reduced by reluctance and ill-will, intrigue, and waste. Every day there is talk of bringing it into order; but as no one has the right to order except the king, the matter passes off in expatiating and lamenting. If this kingdom does not perish under this state of things, there will be a fine wax taper to offer to God. One thing is consoling: the king is

more tranquil than ever. As for me, I have continued fever and paroxysms of it.

The pope has promised, with very good grace, to include me in the next promotion. We are to have an assembly of the clergy, which will be stormy, and to add to our happiness we are threatened with famine, owing to the continual rains which are destroying the harvest. One needs a strong head and a hard heart not to go mad. All this may still be overcome by regulation and authority. But can we hope for them?

I am more anxious about Louisbourg than for anything else at this moment. If that place saves itself, and if the Austrians win some advantage, peace will be made next winter by England.

I have given you the means to come here when it is time. It is for you to judge of that by the operations of our allies and our own. Judge of my situation; I am made to break my pledges weekly. One must be very much attached to the king not to flee to one's abbey.

M. de Contades does very well so far. The Hanoverians seem uneasy. Düsseldorf gives them the means of making M. de Soubise run risks. Maréchal Daun will decide all, and the Russians, if they choose to act.

M. de Castries is doing marvels in the Low Countries. Adieu, my dear count; I will not gloom you further. God grant us good weather and a good government.

LXII.

August 1, 1758.

I sent my thanks yesterday, Monsieur le comte, for the hat which the pope assures me I shall have at the next promotion; so that's an affair settled and nearly ended. For a long time past my enemies, or my pretended friends,

have been trying to embroil me with our friend, under pretext that in seeking to obtain the supreme authority I wish to deprive her of her influence. That infamous idea is the most dangerous of all. It is certain that a mainspring is wanted here, without title, and that mainspring can, and ought to be no other than a sure and intimate friend of Mme. de Pompadour. If they succeed in filling her with distrust, two great evils will result: that of taking the essential thing out of the movement, and of rendering hard work and good intentions useless in public business. I have only praise to give to the loyalty with which she has so far rejected the malicious evil they have tried to do to both of us.

We have lately established here a form of government by assembling weekly to fathom all parts of the expenditures. You would be frightened, my dear count; and you would see how impossible it is, if the war lasts much longer, that we can escape the most complete overthrow.

We have perceived that there is too much risk in talking of peace in Vienna. It is a disagreeable commission for you, and I will take it upon myself, in the first instance, with M. de Staremberg. I will inform you of everything, and all you will have to do is not to contradict my language in Vienna. M. de Staremberg is sending his nephew to Vienna to carry to the empress, so he tells me, several commissions which she had given to him. I let you know of this departure, on which I am asked to form no other idea. *Do not seem to be informed of it.* Perhaps M. de Staremberg has been ordered to send a picture of our exact situation; if so, you may be sure that he will not paint it in fine colours. I do not think that the Court of Vienna means to trick us, in spite of its cautious treatment of the Court of London. *Watch, but show no suspicion.*

The king is resolved to persevere in the alliance, using all his forces; the question, therefore, is how best to employ them and not exhaust them. But I tell you that unless we have some marked success in this campaign, it is useless to hope that we shall be in a state to make one of any importance next year. We shall be more and more exhausted. Once more I say, *Keep for yourself only the topics which will please, and leave to me the burden of all the disagreeable discussions.* Reflect maturely on the idea that I have long had, namely, *I believe you to be more fitted for the Foreign Affairs than myself, considering them from the point of view of the alliance.* You would have more means than I to strike great blows for our friend. On the other hand, united as you and I are, we should become the strongest in Council, and my red hat, if I were separated from the department, would alarm no one. Reflect upon all this for the good of the thing and for your own good. If it suits you, and seems to you wise, we had better work promptly for it. Do not think that I wish to shake off my burden on you. That which you now carry in Vienna is the same that you would have here; but it is a very different thing for you that matters should go ill or well from what it is for me.

I have another reason, into which you can surely enter. Comprehend how much I suffer in finding myself perpetually represented as a man who is trying to destroy my benefactress and my friend. On the other hand, I should be the basest of men if I concealed from her certain truths. See, therefore, how often I must be tried and embarrassed. All these fetters would be removed by the expedient I propose to you. There would be other advantages also for your personal affairs. You are thought in Vienna to be well-intentioned towards the new system; therefore they would not be troubled at seeing the Foreign Affairs pass into your

hands. I will aid you all I can, and I will never cease to be the scarecrow of the ministry. In the long run Maréchal de Belleisle may not resist what people will tell him, to excite his jealousy, — though all goes well so far. But affairs are too important to be hindered by such pettiness. — I speak to you as I think. Answer me in the same way, frankly. You have nerve, and you will inspire more than I do because you will not alarm until after a certain time, when you can do it as well as another; but you will never do so to your friends, and I think that the union of *us three* will only be the stronger, sweeter, and more solid.

Adieu, Monsieur le comte; enough said for to-day. Talk of my hat, and my gratitude to their Imperial Majesties, and to their minister. Maréchal de Belleisle was much touched and gratified by the empress's letter. When you tell me to do so, I will write my thanks for the hat to Vienna.

LXIII.

August 11, 1758.

Prince Ferdinand has recrossed the Rhine at Rées; he gained two marches on M. de Contades by making one prodigious forced march. The latter will have difficulty in following him, for want of supplies. M. de Soubise will find himself in trouble, though he was fully warned of it in time. If he had started two weeks earlier, his diversion in Hesse might have done some good.

The English are at Cherbourg; I do not believe they will stay there long; but for the rest of the summer they will devastate our coasts. This makes an outcry, and occasions fresh expenditures. As for our financial affairs, they will reach a fatal crisis if nothing is done to prop or supplement the credit of M. Montmartel, who insists on doing all without being able to provide all. It is inconceivable that this

kingdom should depend on one man. Perhaps they will at last feel the necessity of taking some broad financial course, without which the ministers, one and all, will be dishonoured. I am promised, for one of these days, fifteen hundred thousand francs. I assure you that all the money we pay out for subsidies is at the expense of our own necessities. You will feel that such a situation cannot long be sustained, and that if peace is not made soon, it will be impossible for us to fulfil other engagements than those of our own defensive. I tell you this that you may be correctly and truly informed of our condition, but not to make any use of it. I am awaiting, my dear count, your answer to my last letter.

The king permits me to urge the promotion. Thus, your orders are executed. They insist in Paris that I am on bad terms with our friend. That is a tale that is renewed from time to time. If it were so, I would not remain twenty-four hours at Court. Ingratitude is not my vice, and I do not believe that truth would ever make a woman who thinks rightly quarrel with me.

For the rest, we are impatiently awaiting news of Maréchal Daun and the Russians. If we have crushed Prince Ferdinand, all is repaired, and we shall remain masters of the electorate of Hanover and of Hesse. But as things are, we can hardly bet on doing great things, and then, beware of the manner in which our winter-quarters are established!

The farther we go in this matter, the more desirable it becomes that it shall end honourably and solidly; but it is useless to torment our allies, and draw down unpleasant remarks upon ourselves. We shall go on as long as we can. We need a general, and money. With that, I would be as warlike as others; without that, I see only shame and ruin.

I hope that our assembly of the clergy may go off well, in spite of all cabals. My future hat begins to give me some influence on the prelacy. In the Council, we continue to busy ourselves in reforming expenditures; the work has lasted three months, and could have been done in three days if anybody was master. Well, one must limit one's self to do the good that is possible, or, at least, to avoid the greater evils.

LXIV.

August 20, 1758.

I have ceased, Monsieur le comte, to describe to you the violent state in which we are. No commerce, consequently no money, no circulation. No navy, consequently no resources to resist England. The navy has no sailors, and the want of money prevents the hope of getting any. What will be the result of such a state of things? The total loss forever of our colonies. Our land forces do not even serve us to defend our coasts; the shores of the kingdom are devastated by a squadron which is making a circuit round Normandy, and will not let go its prey while the fine weather lasts. If we save Louisbourg, what succour can we send our colonies, without money and without ships? It is money that we need; but where find it, when we have no credit, and more is going out of the kingdom than comes into it? We must find resources from economy; but they fear to make the smallest sacrifices; they fear lest private individuals, men in offices, should cry out, but they do not fear to see the kingdom perish! Moreover, they examine the tables of expenditures slowly, whereas they ought to take a course of retrenchment and put stern order into expenditures brusquely. But who is powerful enough to carry out such operations?

I predict to you, my dear count, that even if the King of Prussia were crushed, we should be none the less ruined. England is getting for herself the whole of commerce, and not until we are in a state to harass her there shall we reduce her to reasonable conditions. Therefore, nothing is more necessary than to reach that state next year. To attain it, we must have money and assistance; but even if we find money, where shall we get the assistance? There is no use in thinking any further about Spain. I doubt if Spain could be useful to us even as a mediator; there is no will, nor force, nor decision in that Court. Perhaps, inwardly, they are even glad to see us humiliated. Denmark is only a clever observer, always aiming to get consideration for herself by making both sides seek her. The Dutch dare nothing, and fear all; the Swedes are impotent; and you know what Russia is. I see no assistance to be looked for except from Heaven, or a man of genius — if we only had one here at the head of the finances and the navy!

I am not surprised that the Court of Vienna wants to continue the war; she will never lose anything except men, in whom she abounds; but we, we are losing the very source of our wealth, and with what shall we then prevent the King of Prussia, and his lieutenant Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick from getting the upper hand? One must be stupid indeed not to see the immense difference between the situation of the Court of Vienna and our own. I have desired you here, and I do desire you here more and more, because your activity, your zeal, and your friendship may inspire more vigour. I know that all the evils one is forced to predict may not happen; that fortune is a wheel; I have read, and I remember what I read; but we are so ill on all sides, we have so little strength to pull ourselves out

of the bog, that I tremble almost as much when things go well as when they go ill.

I go over and over this sad tale to you solely to make you feel that I expect nothing from the continuation of the war but a great exhaustion. I know that the Court of Vienna must not be pressed too strongly to work for peace; but it is for their own interest that we, their best and most useful ally, shall not break down without glory in their service. In the moments when the confidence of that Court is not so strong, could you not, without wounding it, demonstrate to it plainly the *uselessness* of a war which is more and more ill-fought and unfortunate? I can answer for it that next year we shall have at least one-half less resources than we now have. It is then that we shall be forced to drink the cup to the dregs.

The winter might bring us safely through. I am of opinion that we should make sacrifices to England to gain peace, and I think that the Court of Vienna ought on their side to make, not real, but imaginary sacrifices in renouncing the greater part of their ideas of aggrandizement. It is more than a year now that I have been preaching this gospel; the up or the down of events makes no difference in my opinions, because I reason on the basis of things, and not on circumstances which may change. The King of Prussia will have an army next year; England will have money; France will have neither army nor money, but it is France which has to furnish means to her allies. There is the plain state of the case. Hence I think that when the present campaign is ended nothing is more urgent than to work for peace. M. de Staremberg talks to me about making peace with England, but says nothing of the other peace. I do not push him, because it is useless to do anything until the close of the present cam-

paign. If we thought alike, — the Court of Vienna and ourselves, — we might at once arrange many things. But their idea is solely to commit us to their own course, and as we will not separate from them we are forced to yield to their impulsion; but, in the end, no State allows itself to be sacrificed for another. There is a limit to virtue; in fact, it ceases to be virtue if driven too far. I therefore exhort you to be very patient during this summer, and very firm in the winter. For, I swear to you, we are not in a condition to continue this war. Enough said on that head.

The Bishop of Laon wishes that the declaration of my hat had been kept secret some time longer. The pope seems to wish not to make his promotion until after the affair of the Venetian decree is ended. That may linger on. And this being so, it is well that the king did declare the pope's promise, 1st, because it gives me more weight and consideration; 2d, because I need not fear the malignities that are done to me in Rome, as the matter is no longer my affair, but that of the king. Cardinal Porto-Carrero has not hurried himself in executing the orders of his Court, which desired that I should be made cardinal singly, as other ministers have been. Ask the Court of Vienna to use the same language, or, at any rate, the same interest. The king has published the consent of that Court to my promotion; so there would be a lack of good grace in showing coldness after showing the contrary.

People have done all they could here to give a bad opinion of me to our friend and to force a rupture between us, but they have not succeeded, and I assure you I am delighted. Well, if the State perishes, it will not be my fault; but I choose, at least, to die like the knight, without fear and without reproach.

Arrange matters with Montmartel; he is in advance to you

by more than two hundred thousand francs. Send the schedule of your expenditures, that I may give Montmartel a written order for payment which shall secure him. You know I authorized him to advance you one hundred thousand francs; but that sum is now doubled; and it is right to calm his uneasiness.

Admit, my dear count, that seeing things as gloomily as I do in the present and in the future, and being much too sensitive to events, I must have a great fund of courage, patience, and strength to bear up as I do. My health is better the last month. We are to have a stormy assembly of the clergy, and I don't know if the new pope will treat us as well as his predecessor. I think he will be weak. God grant that Archinto may maintain himself and not quarrel with Spinelli, and that the latter may not ruin himself by temper and stiffness. On all sides one sees nothing but embarrassment and danger. We must get out of them as best we can. What vexes me is not to find more consideration for us in our allies. They are always scolding us; they make us feel our position, instead of seeking to help us out of it by understanding it. If they were sincere they would be interested in our preservation; but they seem to want to drag out of us our marrow, without troubling themselves as to what becomes of us. *Tell me if I deceive myself in thinking that this is so.*

Let me know if you had any desire to negotiate through the channel of Bayreuth, or whether that is only a fable. For myself, I do not rely on all of these princes, but I like to know what they think. I think you too prudent to embark on any intrigues, and too much my friend to hide anything of that kind from me. Adieu; I embrace you with all my heart, and am attached to you for life.

M. de Staremberg asks if I have sent you your last instructions in the affair of the subsidies. I told him that

something was still lacking. In fact, we must regulate and agree upon the arrearages now due, and make an estimate for the agreed valuation in florins. But this need not prevent you from accepting the articles of the convention, and signing them if you think proper.

LXV.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

VERSAILLES, August 26, 1758.

It is with the greatest joy, Monsieur le Duc, that I call you thus; you do not doubt that, — the bottom of my heart is too well known to you. Your last private letter made me know yours as well.

Mme. de Pompadour has not yet reflected on the excellence of the plan I proposed to you. The king has need of surrounding himself in his ministry with vigorous and well-intentioned men. Our friend has also need of having men about her who are truly interested for her. You see the decadence with which we are threatened. Peace is the sole remedy, but after that we must have a good administration. Adopt my plan, my dear duke, for the good of the thing itself and for the interests of friendship. The king's system needs such help in order to be maintained; the internal administration must get vigour. You would bring both to us.

I only put my hat between you and the moment of your return here. Hasten that. It is ridiculous that the recommendation of the three principal powers should drag on in this way. The subsequent arrangements can easily be made.

Do not disgust Mme. de Pompadour with my idea. I tell you frankly that if it is not adopted my decision is made.

My head is too sensible and my heart too patriotic to see the State rushing on to its ruin, I being in the ministry. I need help, because they would not give me, in time, enough authority to prevent that which to-day is destroying our affairs from top to bottom. Your remaining stay in Vienna ought to be employed in turning minds towards peace in the coming winter. Your return here ought to be marked either by the conclusion of a peace or with the plain purpose of helping us to maintain an unfortunate war. You have courage, and events do not make so great an impression on you as on me. Your career is safe; what have you to fear now, but disaster to the State; or to desire, but its preservation and that of your friends? Besides which, the affairs of Rome would do well in your hands. You and I would act in the greatest union and, thank God, without jealousy of office. We could make sure of our friend's fate; her health and her happiness depend on the state of affairs. I will not say more. Study each consideration, and you will see the extent and value of it.

Adieu; I embrace you as the best friend I have in the world, and as the servant who can be most useful to the king. Prepare for your return without giving alarm where you are. When the time comes the Court of Vienna must see in this arrangement the safety of the alliance. It is the only way to render it permanent.

LXVI.

September 4, 1758.

If our naval and maritime affairs were not desperate; if the state in which they are did not foretell the loss of our colonies;[1] if the irremediable money famine did not take

[1] Exactly one year from the date of this letter was the battle on the Plains of Abraham and the surrender of Quebec. The year 1759 saw the

from us all resources to defend and sustain ourselves; if the whole machine of government did not need repairing and propping, — I should give myself up to joy and hope at the good state in which the empress finds her armies, and at the well combined plans of Maréchal Daun. But I still warn you, very seriously, that the State is lost if we do not make peace this winter; we are about to fall into confusion and disorder. We need two hundred millions of extra means to support our two wars and our subsidies. All parts of our work are failing and languishing because they each have to be fed in turn at the expense of the others. Our army lives and will live from hand to mouth; it has to snatch its subsistence by force from the princes of the Empire. Circulation of money is interrupted; none comes in from abroad and much goes out. All proposals for paper would cause riots in Paris. The nation is in despair.

Whatever success the empress may have, we have lost our cause, because our navy is ruined; and if we choose to continue the maritime war, we must totally renounce the continental war. The navy owes to-day one hundred millions. There are no sailors now in France. What sort of Council is this, of a king who has children, which proposes to him to sacrifice his colonies forever and all his commerce for advantages in Flanders which will give us a ten years' war before they can be realized? The stroke has missed;

defeat of the French at Minden by Prince Ferdinand, the loss of Forts Frontenac and Duquesne, Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and the naval defeats by Admiral Boscawen in the Bay of Lagos, and by Admiral Hawke in the Bay of Quiberon. By the Treaty of Paris, in 1763, the French ceded Canada, Prince Edward Island, the region east of the Mississippi, the islands of St. Domingo, St. Vincent, and Tobago, and all the French settlements on the Senegal coast to England, Louisiana to Spain, and restored Minorca to England. Guadaloupe, captured from the French in 1759, Pondicherry, in 1761, and Martinique, in 1762, were restored to France by the same treaty. — Tr.

and never should men run after their lost money. We have no money, we have no generals; we shall have still less and still fewer by continuing the war, because that army is in want of everything, and it is making war in a barren country, barren in itself and in those on either side of it. The physical theatre of the war will not change, neither can we hope that our military glory will rise without money and without the comfort and well-being of our soldiers and officers. Thus, Monsieur le duc, we have been warned that, once through this campaign, we must not continue the war. The Court of Vienna hopes to embark us on another campaign. We are honest men, we will not willingly abandon that Court; but the structure of the alliance is crumbling down through our impotence to support it. The allies will manage to shift for themselves as soon as we cease to pay them.

Do we wish to wait until an uprising in France shall break, with uproar, an alliance which could still sustain itself by judicious conduct, and a peace which has now become necessary to all Europe? Can the king sacrifice to a heroism of fidelity a kingdom which belongs as much to his children as to himself? In truth, one must consider one's passions only and consult nought but one's hopes, to act on such principles. I should forever feel myself guilty before God and men, if I let the king engulf himself farther in this way. The State, our friends, all demand that we shall come away from the precipice to which we are striding with giant steps.

Profit, therefore, Monsieur le duc, by any moderation you may perceive in the principles of the Court of Vienna to bring about a peace which is forced upon us. We do not wish to compel the Court of Vienna; but Louisbourg is taken, and we can no longer support the war by sea and

land. But in spite of our dangerous state, let us not precipitate anything. Make use of what I have the honour to confide to you, not to alarm too much, but to bring the Court of Vienna to take a course.

I see with grief that we have nothing to hope on our financial side; we shall be lucky if we escape a total overthrow. My representations for a whole year have not varied, therefore I must not be thought to obtrude them. If the empress insists on continuing the war, then we must see with what means we can continue it without ourselves destroying this kingdom forever. The devastation along our coasts, the outrages done to us on our own land revolt the nation. The religionaries are rebuilding their temples. If the kingdom is left without troops what may not happen? Is it reasonable to expose ourselves to such dangers? If our allies care nothing for our injury, they are not our friends, they are even more cruel than our enemies. Take the empress on the side of honour and sentiment. Louisbourg is captured (July 27, 1758), and though the victory of M. de Montcalm at Ticonderoga (July 8) seems to save Canada for this campaign, what will become of it in the campaign of next year? We have no sailors; how, then, can we send them succour? But here 's enough of this sad tale.

Mme. de Pompadour is well assured of my heart, and I am the same as to her manner of thinking. With regard to my hat, it ought to come soon, as that Venice affair is ended. The pope has written me the most polite letter.

If the King of Spain abdicates, it will not be precisely the case contemplated by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, because that looked to the king's death, not his abdication. My paper ends here. You know how much I am attached to you.

The King of Sardinia has expressed to me his joy on my promotion; so there is no chicanery there.

LXVII.

To Madame la Marquise de Pompadour.

Tuesday, September 12, 1758.

Here, madame, is a long letter from the Duc de Choiseul, which must be read with great attention. It depends on you alone whether he holds office. The first two conditions which he proposes are reasonable. It is just to leave him the hope of the third, allowing circumstances to decide. Nothing is more necessary than to fix a sum for the ministry of Foreign Affairs, because nothing is so sacred as the execution of treaties. Nor could anything be better than for the king to declare that we shall work together, and continue to do so for a long time, and that I shall see the ambassadors, etc.; because by that means the Courts which have felt confidence in me will fear nothing from the change of ministry.

The Duc de Choiseul has won M. Kaunitz, so he writes me, and can govern him. Moreover, he can put an activity into the war which is not there now. He will put the same into the finances, and into the navy, and assuredly he and I will always agree. You will enable me to live thirty years longer. With my successor, I shall lead the clergy, the Sorbonne, and parliament; I shall work in concert with him on political matters; I shall no longer wither in my shoes, no longer break my pledges, and I shall have the consolation of seeing the king more glorious than he now is, because the military plans and conduct of the war will be firmer. No one will fear after this that I seek through ambition to be prime-minister. You will have two united friends near you, and the intimate friend of M. de Soubise. You

will make the happiness of all three, and the king will be better served.

I ask you the favour of settling this matter, on which both war and peace depend, very soon. I shall be cardinal a month from now. We must put the Duc de Choiseul in the way of knowing to what he may look sooner or later, in order that he may arrange with the empress and her minister. Believe me, when they know they have to deal with him they will be more flexible. In a word, he has one great advantage over me: it is in knowing the imperial Court; that has always been an embarrassment with me.

My health, my life, and my peace of mind have no part in the plan I propose. If I did not think it the best, I would not speak of it. By this means, the king will have two men instead of one to direct his political matters; I shall no longer break my pledges; peace will not be made until it is necessary; the war will assume another colour. In a word, I see in this appointment an infinitude of advantages.

If the king refuses, I must obey, but I declare to you that from that moment I shall be delivered over to the blackest and most dreadful melancholy, because I shall have no hope of a change for the better in our affairs. You may be sure that I shall fall ill, and be no longer in a condition to work. Rely confidently on what I tell you; my head is affected by our condition, and I need the help of the Duc de Choiseul to carry matters on.

Here is a letter from Monteil which it is well you should also read.

LXVIII.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

September 13, Evening.

M. de Brock, colonel of the Bourbon regiment, brings us the happy news that the Duc d'Aiguillon [commanding in Bretagne] attacked the English on the 11th, at Saint-Malo, killed three thousand men, and took five hundred prisoners. In short, Monsieur le Duc, they were punished for their villanous incendiarisms and pillage. The Chevalier de Polignac is dangerously wounded, also M. de la Tour d'Auvergne. Among the five hundred prisoners were many officers of distinction. Many of the English were drowned, and their boats sunk. To-morrow we shall have more details. I profit by M. de Staremberg's courier to send you this news. You will have one from me in three days. May God preserve what remains of the Russians and protect Maréchal Daun.[1] Good-night, Monsieur le duc; I am going to bed.

LXIX.

September 18, 1758.

Your letter of the 4th, Monsieur le duc, conforms with all I think. If we had a government, if they would resolve on having one, I should, in spite of the frightful state to which bad administration has reduced all parts of our system, be in favour of continuing the war in hopes of coming better out of it. But we shall have no government, because they will not allow a centre of unity, authority, and general influence on all parts of administration, without which gov-

[1] Frederick the Great defeated the Russians at Zorndorf, August 25, and was defeated himself by Maréchal Daun at Hochkirchen, October 14, 1758.

ernment cannot exist. It is this positive certainty that shows me the necessity of making peace. Be sure that money will be lacking; that our armies will only alienate German good-will, disgust themselves, and end by failure everywhere. During that time our colonies will fall, one after another. Although, from the advices we receive from Quebec, it seems certain that the English lied as to the time and circumstances of the taking of Louisbourg, we cannot doubt that that place has really fallen into their hands, because it was in bad condition and could not be relieved.

I have communicated your letter to Mme. de Pompadour. She does not incline to making you minister of Foreign Affairs. She told me to draw up a memorial about it for her to show to the king. *I would not do this, feeling that she was not in favour of it.* But as I think that your presence here is necessary to enable us to have a government at all, and that your presence will be useless unless you have a department which binds you and me together, and will give us both the means of gaining the upper hand in the Council and in the administration, I beg you to drop all the conditions which you have proposed. Those are things that can be done and not announced. The salvation of the State depends on your being here to govern our friend, to save her from the fury of Paris, to re-establish our affairs on a tone and footing on which I have failed to establish them through the umbrage which my frankness gives, on one side, and the malignity felt to me, on the other. Besides which, my health is in so bad a state, and has been for a year past, that I cannot suffice for my work another six months. Arrange your plans on this; as for me, I have chosen my course, namely, to retire altogether if I have no hope of seeing a change.

My hat will apparently arrive during this month. They

have tried to injure me with the pope. The orders of the Court of Vienna did not start till August 27. The Court of Turin (after congratulating me) put obstacles in the way; in a word, I have met with all sorts of petty difficulties. If my hat still lingers I shall quit my office; if it comes, I shall quit it all the same, if I no longer have a hope of seeing France properly administered. You alone can support my courage and the affairs of the State. Bring Mme. de Pompadour to think as we do. You could do this by employing the means that are in your hands. Do not lose a moment, and meanwhile, convert the empress, as you have already converted M. Kaunitz, to peace, which (trust to my good sense) is necessary and indispensable. The will of the empress is not, I admit, the only obstacle, but it is the greatest of all.

In spite of reports, I do not see clearly into the Russian affair. But I see clearly enough that Maréchal Daun will not be master of Saxony in this campaign. I warn you that the Dutch are coming to an agreement with England, and that the latter by returning their vessels and sharing their ill-gotten gains with them, will find the means of pitting them against us. The Porte ought to frighten the two empresses; and we ought to be on our guard against the King of Sardinia. This is what reason dictates. When we can no longer make war, when, above all, we do not know how to make it, we must do the best we can under the circumstances.

Adieu, Monsieur le duc. You know that I am yours entirely.

LXX.

To Madame de Pompadour.

September 19, 1758.

I warn you, madame, and I beg you to notify the king, that I can no longer be depended on for my work. My head is perpetually agitated or confused. For a year past I have suffered martyrdom. If the king is willing to save me he must relieve me. I have not written the memorial you asked me for concerning M. de Choiseul. I do not wish to propose a thing which does not please you. Nevertheless, I defy you to fill my place, under present circumstances, by any other than he. He is the only one who understands the new system in its totality, and he has the confidence of the Court of Vienna. This Court and that of Rome are the only ones with whom we have prickly affairs.

Suppose I were dead (and I am not far from it). I defy you to find me any other successor than the Duc de Choiseul, so long as peace is not made. That is my sentiment; if it is not that of the king, we must at once search for a substitute with whom I can concert matters. If I could breathe freely for a while my health would recover; but it is dreadful now. I have been ill all night. I cannot sleep. My mind is too straightforward, madame, my soul is too sensitive to bear the idea of our present and future situation. It is true that the state of my nerves adds much to my natural sensitiveness. In a word, I can no longer answer for my work if the king does not have the goodness to allow me a speedy relief. I will not wait until the last extremity to give warning of the state in which I am.

The Turk seems seriously disposed for war. Imagine the risks the two empresses are running! But that is not what

alarms me; it is our own situation, — no money, no navy, no generals, and no remedy for so many evils.

The medicine of my committees is too slow; it does not cure. But at least, madame, I have nothing to reproach myself with. I have always told the truth; I have foretold our disasters. My department is the only one which still supports itself, but I have no longer the strength to maintain it. I have given warning of this, and I have pointed out the only man who is capable of bearing the weight of it. It is for you to see, with the king, who can replace me. I cannot have the weakness, in order to retain my office, to run the risk of dishonouring myself and of injuring the affairs of the king. I must have a little rest and less anxiety of mind. When I am not charged with the duty of making peace, my mind will grow more tranquil. I do not believe that the king or you will suspect me of seeking a pretext to relieve myself of affairs. I owe too much to the king not to sacrifice my life to him, but I will never sacrifice his interests. But if the king should suspect me of some hidden purpose, and should think that, being cardinal, I wish for repose, I beg you to let me know it at once. I will send a courier to Rome and stop the hat, or I will promise the king not to accept it. It is not laziness or ambition that makes me say this, it is truth and integrity.

LXXI.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

September 23, 1758.

I received an express this morning which takes from us all hope of the deliverance of Saxony, and consequently of reducing the King of Prussia by any other means than

exhaustion, a long and difficult thing, for which our capacities cannot wait. The object of the war has changed since the King of Prussia acquired superiority and our naval affairs became decadent. We are only making war now because it is begun; the hope of realizing our treaties no longer exists. God knows how the campaign in Saxony will end, and how the imperial armies will recross the mountains, or how and where we can establish winter-quarters.

In any case we must begin the next campaign without money, without sufficient recruits, at least on our side, and without generals. We cannot expect in that campaign other events than we have had in the present one, but it is quite certain that we shall lose Canada and perhaps other colonies. In good faith, can we, without manifest imbecility, continue a war with such certainties, solely because it is begun; should fidelity to pledges go so far as the total destruction of the kingdom? I do not impute to the Court of Vienna sentiments so little equitable, but it may happen that, thinking more of her interests than of ours, she will profit by our honesty to draw from us such succour as we can grant her and such diversions as we can make in her favour to drag the war along. This way of thinking, less barbarous than the other but quite as dangerous, is much to be feared, and (supposing it to exist) we must not be its victims.

Let us recall what was said at the end of the winter. The king had promised the present campaign. They now insist on another campaign, and lure us by the hope of the mediation of Spain, which would be of no effect, partly through the ill-will of the Spanish prime-minister, partly from the anarchy into which the Spanish nation has fallen in consequence of the hypochondria of its king. Time is

going by, and we shall soon touch spring, and then there will be a hue and cry if we do not act. *Now is the time*, therefore, to break the ice, and know precisely if the empress means to make peace or not, or how she expects us to support her war at the risk of our own destruction. If she continues the war, examine and see how we can assist her without abandoning our navy totally, or without exposing ourselves to general bankruptcy and the stoppage of all of our services; for I predict to you that such things will happen, and my predictions have been, unfortunately, only too true.

You will feel, moreover, that, in renouncing the Low Countries and obtaining nothing from this war but the certainty of ruin with dishonour, the bargain is a bad one and that peace must be sought. I know that the Court of Vienna thinks that, dishonoured as we are, we shall be dependent upon it; but that is precisely what we cannot endure. In spite of our dishonour we have armed for that Court all Europe by our negotiations and our money; let it compare us with its old allies, the English; let it compare our docility, our generosity, our good faith, with the opposite vices. It will always be for the interests of the Court of Vienna to preserve our alliance, because, weak as we now are, we can at any time find other allies.

You will ask me, "How can peace be made?" By causing the restitution of Saxony; by giving up the idea of sharing the skin of a bear who knows better how to defend himself than we know how to attack him. The end of this campaign of Maréchal Daun (which has totally missed its object) is a good text on which to comment. It is plain that as soon as the principal object of the campaign is missed by the Austrians the rules of the game permit us to risk nothing, and to take measures to prevent the King of

Prussia from reinforcing Prince Ferdinand and putting him in a state to make war upon us all winter. His mind must be turned to peace, to the preservation of his forces, consequently to a defensive warfare.

Before opening this matter to the Court of Vienna, you must, Monsieur le duc, make your plan and communicate it to us immediately, in order that I may send you the final resolution of the king, who will write himself, if necessary, to the empress.

I think that the Porte ought to make as much impression on the Court of Vienna as Holland does upon us. Both coasts trouble me and make me anxious. You will see what I have written to M. de Vergennes [ambassador at Constantinople]. I must tell you that it would be impossible to put more stiffness into doing anything that would give us ease than M. de Cobentzel [Austrian minister in the Low Countries] does. They regard us in Vienna as ruined bankers, from whom they must draw the last penny before bankruptcy. It would be too cruel to suspect that when we are reduced to that point they will turn their backs upon us and league with our enemies. I drive that bad thought from me when it comes. But I cannot prevent it from returning again and again. Well, when all is said, here are the facts: we wished to make peace last winter; the king had the compliance to yield to the empresses' desire for the present campaign; which has produced nothing but great exhaustion, the loss of Louisbourg, with the certainty of soon losing the rest of our stations. We have trembled this year for all the maritime provinces of the kingdom. Several have suffered great losses; we shall need next year more troops to defend the kingdom itself, which cannot be refused without great injustice and inhumanity; but here comes in the weakening of our forces in Germany — reason the more to expect

nothing from another campaign. Possibly we might save our colonies by some dazzling enterprise; but are we in a condition to risk it?

I am piling up my ideas to you; I give them to you to digest and make into a chyle suitable to Austrian stomachs. Let us renounce great enterprises, Monsieur le duc; our government is not fit for them. It will not change, because they refuse to associate you with me in this country. That was, and still is, the only resource. Employ upon it all your energy, *for your sake and that of your friends.* As for me, I can do no more. I was ill unto death the other day. I die of shame and despair; but I assure you that everybody here is very tranquil, and they think my head is out of order when I see things gloomily.

Let us save the State and renounce forever our project of doing something grand and honourable; it will be enough if we save its existence; that must suffice us. I own to you that I was not born to live in this age, and that I could never have believed, without seeing, what I do see. Your presence here might restore things if, by concerting together, we could take a certain course. I have proposed them all, but I have not enough influence to get them accepted, or rather, executed.

The pope has delayed the Consistory till October 2; you can imagine that I have endured all platitudes and every sort of petty vexation. Though I am the choice of all the Catholic powers, I am forced to dance attendance as if I were not the minister of the king. That affects me only as a dull stupidity, for I am not lucky and happy enough to be affected by that which concerns my fortunes only. Cold indifference has frozen in me all idea of ambition. I aspire to peace to get my *congé* honourably. Tonsured abbé or cardinal, it is all the same to me now. I should like to

restore my health, which is destroyed, and go and live in some other country than mine, because I cannot digest the shame into which it is plunged.

There is my whole soul. Mme. de Pompadour tells me sometimes to amuse myself and not make gloom. It is as if she told a man with a burning fever not to be thirsty. *Come here, if you can. If you cannot, or will not, make peace as soon as possible,* or at least *put us in the way of escaping total ruin.* It is better to save the country than run after that lure of the Low Countries. I think you are nearing my way of thinking since the feeble, undecided action of Maréchal Daun. *You brought us by your reasons to resolve on this campaign;* therefore yield to the necessity that overwhelms us; take a strong resolution to convince the empress. I embrace you, Monsieur le duc, with tender and sincere friendship.

I have converted the Infanta as to peace; she feels the necessity for it. If her father is ruined what will become of her?

With regard to arrearages on the subsidies, we could agree on an annual sum to pay it off by degrees. But let us renounce the secret treaty, which is a dangerous and harassing bond, and keep to the defensive treaty, adding to that whatever a generous friendship may dictate. My opinion would be to give money rather than 24,000 men. By treating in concert with the Court of Vienna our alliance remains intact; otherwise we should have to negotiate with each ally, and the Court of Vienna and ourselves might not hold the same language, which would produce a medley and lead of course to squabbles and bitterness. Make your plan on all this, and communicate it to us; meantime urge minds to peace with skill, prudence, and firmness.

The Infanta sends you many compliments.

LXXII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

September 26, 1758.

I could not have the honour, madame, of writing to you this morning or of sending you the letter of the Duc de Choiseul which came by express from Strasburg; his despatch is in cipher. He seems to me very much dissatisfied. He has reason to be. I cannot send you the details because the letter is in cipher. God grant that Maréchal Daun may preserve his army.

My health is worse than ever. I have had a colic which lasted ten hours. The giddiness increases. It is not possible for me to bear up under sleeplessness, bodily suffering, hard and continual labour, and the keenest anxiety for the future. If it were a question of my life only, that could be laughed at, but public affairs are, and will be, too dependent on my work to allow me to leave the king ignorant of my condition. I am grieved to grieve you; but you would never pardon me for deceiving you and failing the king, and you would have reason not to do so.

While still awaiting La Borde [Court banker] nothing is ended with regard to Montmartel. He asks with might and main to be relieved of the war, believing it to be beyond the powers of the kingdom. All the revenues of the king will not pay for the supplies that are needed this winter, and one hundred millions will not restore the navy. A better administration is the only remedy for the evils of the State. Peace is necessary, no matter how difficult it may be. I am doing the impossible to bring our allies to it. We ought to have successes to force the enemy to it; but can we hope for them? We shall still have the same generals, and the King

of Prussia will still know better than we how to make war.

On this we must count. When one has no longer a reasonable hope, one is forced to take a decided course (however distasteful it may be) to avoid greater evils.

Remember that it is impossible that I should be charged with breaking the treaties that I have made. Therefore prepare in advance to choose some one who can dissolve engagements we can no longer fulfil. I will help him with all my means, and I shall have my head freer as soon as I cease to fail in keeping my word. It is these failures that rend my soul. No man can keep his honour and play the part that I play every Tuesday morning towards the foreign ministers. The Denmark affair is dreadful. I would like to know if ever a minister of Foreign Affairs was in the position that I am in to-day. The political system of the king has been maintained up to the present moment by my efforts. My department is the only one that is not yet dishonoured, but it soon will be. It is simple enough that with honour, self-respect, and love for my master's reputation I should suffer anguish. A man cannot always bear up in so cruel a position as mine. Therefore I say to you (with the truth that I owe to you) *I can bear no more* — in the literal meaning of those words.

I see plainly that no one speaks to you in language as frank as mine; they all give you hopes. But I, who am not a courtier and who love you with all my heart, I, who see what will surely happen,— I have the courage to tell it to you, because I ought to do so from honour, from attachment, from gratitude.

In spite of my illness I have seen the wise clergy and the foolish clergy; I encouraged them both. I hope the clerical Assembly will pass off without an uproar. To-morrow I shall see the robes and reassure them as to what

is taking place in the Assembly. Until the grave I shall serve the king and the State; but I must be rescued from dishonour if it is desired to save my head and my life.

LXXIII.

September 29, 1758.

I have passed a better night, madame, without fever and with less pain in the pit of the stomach, which is the seat of my disorder. I need to take serious care of my health, and that is impossible in the business I am now doing. Be certain that I cannot bear up much longer, and as no step has been taken to supply my place, much embarrassment will follow.

I can never be accused of not being sufficiently attached to the king and to his affairs. It is because I have been too sensitive to them that my health has broken down. Believe, madame, that what I have proposed to you is the sole means of preserving me for the king's service and of giving a more fortunate turn to his affairs. I have no longer the strength to struggle against events. I warn you, my head is ill; with rest and the sense that I am not dishonouring myself, I shall recover; without rest I shall fall into a state in which it will not be possible for me to do anything.

Whether from friendship for me, or for the good of the cause, have the kindness to speak to the king when it becomes a question of arrangements; it is an easy matter to do. No man can live without eating or sleeping. My bile has mingled with my blood and has gone to my head. I see nothing before me but a dreadful future, because I shall have to break all the treaties I have made. The Duc de Choiseul is the only man who can carry out the system of the king, or else break loose from it. He knows the Court of Vienna, and above all, it was not he who made

the treaties. He will find you expedients; he will not go too fast, because we shall work together. As soon as I obtain a little rest and have the certainty of no longer breaking my word, I shall revive; without that, I am as good as dead, or incapable of work.

I beg you to give the king the inclosed letter from the Bishop of Orléans. I shall still rest to-day to let my bile flow naturally.

It is extraordinary that we have no news from Saxony.

LXXIV.

October 4, 1758.

I have written to the Bishop of Laon, madame, for Prince Louis de Rohan, in accordance with his Majesty's instructions. The courier must already have started. I send you M. de Choiseul's letter. He has begun to "cast the bell" with the Court of Vienna; in a day or two I shall send him a despatch which shall rule the fate of the alliance. It is time now to take a course here.

I send you the memorial you asked of me for the king. I do not know whether he can decipher it; but I dared not confide it to a secretary, nor could I copy it myself, as I suffer much from my stomach.

I have received confirmation from England of the news that those gentlemen intend to make landings along our coast, not so much to succeed in any enterprise as to cause us expense and damage, and prevent us from thinking of other things.

I beg you to read my memorial attentively. You may regard it as my last will and testament. There is not a word in it that I do not think. I shall be understood some day, and justice will be done to me. No man was ever more attached to the king and the State *for their sakes* than

I am. I have made a great fortune too fast; that is my misfortune. You know how long a time you persecuted me to come out of my obscurity. It is not my fault that I have attained honours. I desire only the happiness of the king and the glory of the nation; after that to die, or to live tranquilly with my hens and chickens, that is all my desire. But now *I can no more.* Something must be wrong with my liver, for every day I suffer such colics in my stomach.

God send us good news of Hesse and Saxony.

Memorial for the King.

To shorten this memorial, I beg Your Majesty to ask Madame de Pompadour for the details of the history I shall here recount in brief.

Since the recrossing of the Rhine and all the disorder and misfortunes that caused it, and since the English disembarked at Louisbourg, I have foreseen disaster only.

Your Majesty will remember that last year and immediately after the battle of December 5 [Lissa, or Leuthen], I felt the necessity of thinking of peace and of bringing our allies to do so, without exposing ourselves to a rupture with them.

But Your Majesty knows what resistance the Court of Vienna has made to this project.

I was discouraged, because I believed that your pledges were too heavy; that the finance department could not meet them; and also that the administration of the army and navy would ruin your kingdom by dishonouring the nation.

I then diminished by half the subsidy to Vienna, and I have since then profited by all events to oblige that Court to take the side of peace; it promised to consider it after this campaign. But it is not difficult to perceive that its object is to gain time, and continue the war. If Your

Majesty could concur in that idea without exposing yourself to the greatest risks, I should not oppose it; but I should betray my duty if I left Your Majesty ignorant that the State is in the greatest danger, unless expenditures are considerably reduced, and unless England meets with the utmost resistance from us in the coming campaign.

My health, much altered during the past year, grows worse daily. My head is continually dazed and confused. I cannot sleep, and my mind is troubled when my thoughts face the future.

If I were less sensitive to the glory and happiness of Your Majesty, I should have more strength to serve you. But I own that the rôle I am made to play in Europe, forcing me to fail in all my promises, has blighted my heart, and that to-day, when it becomes a question of renouncing the secret treaty and the other treaties that grew out of it, not only do I not feel the courage to say the necessary words, but I even feel that it is not possible for me to be useful to Your Majesty as minister of Foreign Affairs, after losing in that office all my credit. *None but a new minister can make new pledges.* I am so convinced of this truth that it is more than four months since I spoke of it strongly to Mme. de Pompadour, with the intention that she should render an account of what I said to Your Majesty. I have reason to believe that in the beginning she imagined that my head was excited, or my nerves affected.

I appeal, Sire, to the fairness of your own mind, and I entreat Your Majesty to consider whether in breaking, or in keeping my promises, it is possible for me to fulfil an office which depends wholly on public opinion and confidence.

Convinced of this truth, consumed with grief and anxiety, my health failing, and fearing to be no longer able to do the work, I wrote to M. de Stainville [Choiseul] a private letter,

in which I revealed to him my state. *I had already spoken of him to Madame de Pompadour as suitable to take my place*, giving her my reasons, which did not convince her. M. de Stainville himself seemed to me far removed by his own taste from occupying so embarrassing a post, but wholly resigned to accept it if (1) Your Majesty truly desired it, (2) if you consented to give him back his liberty when peace was made and affairs were re-established, and (3) above all, if the funds intended for the subsidies were established in such a manner that he might be sure of not breaking his word.

Such, Sire, were the conditions he took the liberty to propose. *It would have been difficult for a wise man, and a man of honour not to insist upon them.*

I showed my answer to Madame de Pompadour, who, thinking M. de Choiseul useful in Vienna, and me well-placed in the Foreign Affairs, had some difficulty in giving her approval. But as she feels that the service of your Majesty may be involved in it, she told me to make a memorial setting forth my motives and my reasons, in order that Your Majesty might have time to reflect upon them.

I forgot to tell you above, Sire, that M. de Choiseul made a fourth condition: that we should work together, he and I, and that I should even continue to see the ambassadors and talk to them of their affairs, — his project being to concert with me in all things. In fact, there is no jealousy to be feared between us.

The motive which induces me to retire from the office I occupy is: My health, which is not sufficient for the work or its anxieties, and can no longer bear up under the sense of breaking, or failing to fulfil, the treaties that I made myself. I should deceive Your Majesty if I spoke another language; and I should cause great embarrassment to Your Majesty

if I did not warn you of the danger the State would run through me if I kept an office in which I can no longer hope for the confidence of our allies, and of which my health can no longer bear the burden.

The motives for giving my office to the Duc de Choiseul are :—

1. Because he is the only one of your ministers who knows and understands the whole of your political affairs.

2. Because he is the only one who possesses the confidence of the Court of Vienna, and who knows it well enough to turn it round, or turn himself to face it without awkwardness.

3. Because he has given proof of patience, courage, and skill, and his phlegm has nearly always held in check his natural vivacity.

4. Because if any other than he succeeded me, it would be said that Your Majesty had given up your political scheme. *This consideration is most important.*

5. Because M. de Choiseul is a soldier as well as a statesman; consequently he can give plans for war, or ratify those that are proposed.

6. Because, knowing the Court of Vienna, he knows how to treat with it — which is also an important point under present circumstances.

7. Because he is a great worker, active, full of resources and expedients, *and much less sensitive than I am to events.*

8. Because his birth and habits of social life are extremely suitable for a minister of Foreign Affairs.

9. Because he can concert with me; I have things he lacks; he has those I lack. United they cannot but produce a good effect.

The only objection that can be made to him is that his success has made him enemies; but he does not trouble

himself about that. His fortune is made; his ambition is not to be feared.

Besides, Sire, your affairs have need of activity, nerve, and resolution. I cannot conceal from you that if you do not promptly remedy the administration of the navy you will ruin yourself and lose your colonies. The minister of Foreign Affairs is charged with making war by land and sea; but when neither service seconds him he falls into despair if he has honour, and love for your glory.

Follow the example of your enemies in regard to the navy. They have an admiralty council composed of men of experience. The very stones cry out against the mal-administration of our navy. The State is suffering from it; it must be changed; otherwise, how is it possible that the minister can make peace with England? I have supported the new system, though thwarted by all events and by all the other departments. I have exhausted my forces, and my representations have produced no effect whatever.

I believe, Sire, that M. de Choiseul is the only man in your kingdom who can preserve the alliance while abrogating the treaties — as the state of the finances now compels us to do.

I cannot acquit myself of all that I owe to Your Majesty except by telling you the truth.

In conclusion, if you adopt this arrangement (which seems to me necessary and indispensable), I shall not, for all that, be useless to your service. The clergy are beginning to feel confidence in me; I can end its war with the parliaments; and perhaps I shall thus render you, Sire, very important services for the tranquillity of the interior of your kingdom and for the conclusion of your reign.

I entreat Your Majesty to pardon all the faults of this memorial, which I have written with one dash of the pen and without taking breath.

Your Majesty will write your orders and reflections on the margin, if it so pleases you.

LXXV.

To Madame de Pompadour.

October 6, 1758.

I have had a colic all night, madame. It is impossible that I can bear up much longer. The king must choose a course. I send you a letter I have written to him and which he will certainly show to you. In it I described my state; I spoke to him of his affairs and I begged him to read the memorial I sent through you, and to give me his orders so that the Duc de Choiseul may arrange with the Court of Vienna. I have no longer the strength, nor the health, nor the courage to bear the burden of affairs. *I see to what we are coming, and I will not dishonour myself.* The Duc de Choiseul, braver and less affected than I, will serve the king well. I will aid him with good faith and friendship. In a word, madame, it is not possible for me to keep my office, now that I see I cannot fill it; and I must be believed.

If an absolute retirement is thought best and it would do no harm to the king's new system, I will ask for it. Sincerely, can it be exacted of me that I should dishonour myself, and run the risk of doing injury to the service of the king? I have spoken to the king of my affair in Rome, which was treated yesterday in the Council as a settled thing. My advice would be that the king should order me to renounce the hat, and to inform the pope of this through his ambassador. What matters it whether I am cardinal? but it does matter much that the king should be slighted and that they should grow accustomed to disregard the promises they make to him. If the king does not take this course, his ambassador must

speak firmly and demand the fulfilment of the pope's word. They write me from Rome — and it is hell that spreads the rumour — that the Duc de Choiseul is charged by you to prevent my promotion in an underhand manner. You can well believe that I put no faith in that horror.

LXXVI.

To the King.

October 6, 1758.

SIRE:

The well-being of your affairs occupies me solely, and I dare even to say that it affects me too much, for my health suffers to such a point that for a year past I have feared to succumb and leave Your Majesty in the midst of these most thorny affairs and in circumstances so critical. Also, Sire, my mind is deeply impressed with the future results of this war. I see no hope on the naval side. It is now three months that we have deliberated over this, and nothing has been decided. While spending much money, Your Majesty cannot offer next year any resistance to the English. The obstinacy of the Court of Vienna in continuing the war will exhaust your kingdom of men and money. I am obliged to propose the retrenchment of subsidies; and as soon as I make that proposal I lose all credit with your allies, and consequently I become useless to your service. I have been made to break my word so often that my heart is crushed. I am dishonoured and discredited, and I see that I shall be still more so. It is impossible, Sire, for a man of honour to live in a situation like this. My mind is troubled; often I am unable to work; I cannot sleep; I spend my nights in sufferings and in agitations under which I cannot bear up much longer. Your service must not suffer, and it is my duty to warn Your Majesty in time, that you

may take a course. I have long spoken in this tone to Mme. de Pompadour; I gave her a memorial on which I am awaiting the orders of Your Majesty. If you approve of my ideas, it is necessary to inform the Duc de Choiseul promptly, that he may make his arrangements with the Court of Vienna. Your affairs are to-day in a state that will admit of no delay.

I would not say yesterday at the Council all that Your Majesty should know on the delay of my promotion. Your Majesty, out of kindness to me, has often announced it for the 2d of this month. All letters from Rome have stated this so positively that it is impossible that attention should not be called in France and in Europe to the little regard paid to Your Majesty, in this matter. The pope promised Your Majesty, and you have publicly declared the pope's promise; it has been printed in the Gazette; the Courts of Spain and Vienna gave their consent; it is treating France too lightly to pay so little regard to her. Rome is managed only by firmness and some haughtiness. The Venetians are complaining already that the pope has made a cardinal *in petto* without paying his debt to the Republic. They are following up this affair with force and dignity. As for me, Sire, I propose one of two things: either that Your Majesty should complain of these delays, and ask the pope to fulfil his promise quickly, or else that, wounded by the little regard paid to Your Majesty in this affair, you should order me to renounce the hat and declare this at Rome by your ambassador. The last method would please me best, because it would put a stop to the pope's acting towards Your Majesty with such feebleness and indecision, and the harm would be done to me only. We must wait a week before doing anything; but as Your Majesty is about to start for Fontainebleau it is necessary that I should know your intentions before your departure. This affair is going to take

from me all my credit and influence with the clergy, and (what is still more unfortunate for the affairs of Your Majesty) with the foreign Courts.

My project, Sire, is to serve you all my life; have the kindness, therefore, to save it by giving me time to recover my health. My liver is attacked, and I am daily threatened with hepatic colic. I need rest of mind and exercise of body. Have the kindness to read my memorial, and put me in a position to inform the Duc de Choiseul of your intentions.

I am, with the most profound respect, Sire, Your Majesty's very humble and

Very obedient servant,

THE ABBÉ DE BERNIS.

LXXVII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

VERSAILLES, October 6, 1758.

Why are you shocked by the horrors of hell? you would have enough to do! What have they not said to you of me? You think rightly that the same spirit of discord is blowing beside me, trying to convince me that you love me no longer. You can see for yourself whether I suspect M. de Choiseul of endeavouring to destroy his own work. I do not believe that you have done me the outrage to suppose that I thought you capable of it; or that I could suspect you of wishing to do me harm. I owe all to you. I believe that we ought to tell each other the horrors that are spread about. This last one was sent me from Paris, and I will now tell you what gave rise to it.

On the day after the affair of the Duc de Broglie, you said to the Duc de Villeroy and to another person who was

with him, "Do not you mean to congratulate me?" M. de Villeroy (duke or marquis, for I don't know which) answered, in presence of Crémille, "I heard only yesterday that the Abbé de Bernis was to have the hat." To which you replied, simply enough: "Eh! I am not talking to you of that, I am talking of the victory in Hesse." On that text, repeated everywhere, it is reported in Paris that you are vexed at my promotion; and this fine news has been sent to Rome in addition to that about M. Berryer, namely: that you put him into the Council to bar me in it, and that M. de Puysieux was only put there to destroy the system, and consequently, overthrow me. You have seen in the letters, true or false, of M. d'Affry, how the idea of my hat troubled them, and I should not be surprised if England moved heaven and earth to throw me over; and I say as much about the King of Prussia and all mischievous minds, whether French or foreign.

We ought, madame, to confide these things mutually to each other, and we ought also to know each other well enough to be devoid of suspicion. The best method is to tell all. I shall follow it, and in that I believe that I fulfil a a duty.

I have re-read the letter of the pope, and that of Cardinal Archinto. They both formally promise the king that I should be included in the first promotion. The king might be angry that they broke their word to him in the promotion of September 1, but that may well be pardoned to the pope's nephew; but if a second were made without including me the pope would have broken his word to the king, and his Majesty cannot allow it without derogating to himself and being in future at a *Plait-il, maître?* with the Court of Rome.

For the other matter, if I were only well, and thought

myself able to support all alone the king's system, I would ask for no one. The one I propose is he who can be the most useful, and I am not permitted to compromise the king's affairs when I do not feel within me the strength to bear the burden of them. There is the bottom of my heart. I have honour, and reason, and through them I look at the happiness of the king, and the welfare of the State.

Be sure that I know your soul well, and that I respect it; and I flatter myself that you render the same justice to mine.

There is nothing new to-day. It is certain that those villanous Russians will pass again into Poland; a fresh attempt may cover them with glory.

LXXVIII.

October 8, 1758.

I have written you a long letter this morning, madame, and have sent it through M. Janel. It will show you the exact situation of things and minds, and the tranquillity which will reign in the heads of the foreign ministers, the clergy, the parliament, and Montmartel after the assurances which I have given them. I made with pleasure my public confession of faith and sentiments for you, and of the friendship and confidence you have never ceased to show me. I have told the Bishop of Évreux what was necessary to enable him to inform his brother [the Duc de Choiseul] as to the first steps he ought to take on arriving here, and as to the traps he must avoid in all that concerns us both; in a word, I am content because I have punctually fulfilled my duty towards the king, and towards you. Consequently, I count on Your Excellency being always the good friend of My Eminence, and much at her ease with him.

M. Duquesne has arrived [captured by the British with

his two vessels in March, 1758], on a parole of two months. They have made him master of arranging here for the exchange of prisoners. I send you the letter of Mr. Pitt for transmission to the king from me.

I am taking the Vichy waters seriously to clear my liver, and cure my giddiness, which returns from time to time. We have committee to-night. I assure you of my tender respect.

LXXIX.

The King to the Abbé-Comte de Bernis.

VERSAILLES, October 9, 1758.

I am sorry, Monsieur l'Abbé-Comte, that the affairs with which I intrust you affect your health to the point of your not being able to sustain the burden of the work.

Certainly no one desires peace more than I do; but I wish a solid peace, and not a dishonourable one. I sacrifice very willingly my own interests, but not those of my allies.

Work in conformity with what I say to you, but hasten nothing. Here is the campaign drawing to a close; let us await that crisis; perhaps it may present to us more fortunate occasions not to completely lose all by abandoning our allies so villanously. It is after the peace that retrenchments of all sorts of expenditures must be made, and principally in the depredations of the army and navy; which is impossible in the middle of a war like this. Let us content ourselves with diminishing abuses and preventing too great expenditures, without upsetting everything, as will be indispensable when peace is made.

I consent with regret that you resign the ministry of Foreign Affairs into the hands of the Duc de Choiseul, whom I think to be at this moment the only suitable person,

being absolutely determined not to change the system I have adopted, nor allow a change to be mentioned to me. Write to him that I accept your proposal; that he is to inform the empress, and consult that princess as to the person most agreeable to her to take his place, whether in the first or the second order; that ought to please the empress, and convince her of my sentiments, to which she has so happily given birth.

LOUIS.

LXXX.

To Madame de Pompadour.

October 10, 1758.

The courier from Rome brought me the red hat to-day at three o'clock in the morning. I owe it to you, for I owe all to you. Be very sure that I can never lose the memory of it, nor of your friendship, nor of my obligations to you. I ask your pardon for all the worries I have caused you for the good of the State. There is still time to remedy the evils. How guilty should I be if I stifled the voice of my conscience, and the natural and acquired ideas that I have! I adore the king, and his fame is dearer to me than life. Believe that no ambitious thought poisons the zeal that you see me have in his service. I have all that I can have personally; but I lack the happiness of seeing the king respected by his allies and his enemies. With courage to remedy abuses, affairs may yet be restored. No one, after the king, is so interested in this as you, and no one, by character and sentiments, is more fitted to concur in so great a work. The confidence of the king places the means in your hands.

LXXXI.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

VERSAILLES, October 11, 1758.

I have been cardinal for two days, Monsieur le duc, and I heard the news yesterday. Archinto is dead; that grieves me much. I wish that your friend Spinelli might have his place. M. de Laon has fairly well amalgamated with him. Spinelli wrote me a letter with his own hand, *in French*, very civil.

I beg you to be the bond of all our connections. The clergy will regard me as their supporter, and I shall make good usage of that sentiment to give internal tranquillity. I shall not lose the confidence of parliament; and my system is to prevent collision between the two bodies. The cabals that were stirred up in Rome to prevent my promotion proved powerless, so that is over. The Bishop of Laon behaved with sincerity, and I am content with him. Perhaps you do not think quite enough of him. He is not a fool, nor a man without shrewdness. Moreover, he is moderate, and has embraced with honesty the principles of the king, which are not exactly his own.

The king has shown a veritable joy at my promotion. He has marked, and re-marked it. *Your affair and mine is settled.* I cannot do better than send you a word-for-word copy of the letter which the king wrote me two days ago, in reply to a strong and detailed memorial which Mme. de Pompadour had given him from me. I have explained, clearly, all your conditions. They have been well received. Mme. de Pompadour will tell you as to this more than I can tell you myself.

The great point is that you are agreeable to the king.

During the first six months, you can make them take all the courses that you judge suitable. That is the right of the new-comer, and you must use it. As for me, I am yours, body and soul. There can be no jealousy between us, for you will feel that I should never have quitted my office if I still retained a hankering after it. I will do with you all that you wish me to do. I believe that our friendship will be useful to the king and the State, and no spirit of domination will ever change it. We will discuss all matters between us; we shall dispute perhaps, but we shall end by agreeing.

M. de Staremberg arraigned me yesterday on the promise exacted by Vienna, namely: that being a cardinal I should not cease to be secretary of State. My promise will be fulfilled because, under our system, we shall be two heads in one cap. I do not think that the Court of Vienna, which suspects me of wanting to make peace, will be sorry to see you in my place. It is for you to make it feel the advantage it will gain by the change. I think that, while awaiting the choice of your successor, you can safely leave Montazet in charge of the correspondence. He knows the country and the army; you know him; therefore this may be convenient to you, and perhaps useful during a time when any other arrangement might be too hurried.

You could not get out of your embassy more agreeably or more fortunately than by the door I have opened to you. I could not endure the burden of toil any longer because of my health. I have an obstructed liver, colics of the stomach, and continual giddiness. For ten months I have scarcely slept. My face is sometimes like that of a leper, because the arrested bile goes to the skin. I should have broken down completely in two months. I even own to you that I do not see how I have kept up so long; I have always worked, ill as I was.

I have this moment received a letter from Montazet, telling me of the retreat of Maréchal Daun, which may not be as lucky as that of the King of Prussia after the siege of Olmütz. The army of the Empire seems to me much exposed. If the Court of Vienna cannot resolve on peace, I do not see what it can do. It is for you to come to some agreement with the empress as to this. Be sure that neither her army nor ours will do anything of value. Here is ours in motion, and the imperial army retreating. What will become of the Swedes and Russians? M. de Montazet must see some ulterior purpose in Maréchal Daun's movement, or how can we reconcile this retreat with what you announced to us in your despatch of October 2d? I do not understand it.

Settle yourself all the points that might embarrass you with the Court of Vienna. Put yourself at ease about the subsidies, making sure, at least, of considerable diminutions if the war lasts. Clean up the matter of the arrearages, the revenues of conquered countries, and other matters of pecuniary interest. Consolidate the arrangements regarding the Infanta Isabella; they write me from Naples that the marriage of the Princess of Naples with the archduke seems to be off.

I do not think that the empress has any cause to complain of the king. She will never have a better ally. But the king and she have cause to complain furiously of their generals. We need here a minister of the navy who has some brains. M. de Massiac is a stupid fat man, and his colleague, who is not without intelligence, has no views as a minister, and is infected with the prejudices of the legal body from which he comes. You will find your bureaus here all well mounted. It is very easy to hold them in hand through their chiefs. In four words, you will find

how little there is to do in running this bureau machine, which is to-day the best organized, and the most tranquil of all of them. I shall ask you but two favours: that of fulfilling the promises I have already made to the ambassadors, and the ministers of the king, and I particularly commend to you M. de Monteil, who is my relative and friend; and I would also ask you to keep my two private secretaries in the bureaus until you are able to place one of them, M. Brun, whom you know and like, and who was in correspondence with you when you were in Rome and he in Venice. I need to keep them in the bureaus for the work I shall have to do with you, copying memorials, etc.; and I am not in a position (with the enormous costs of my household, and of the pope's chamberlain, who will soon be here) to pay large salaries to men who have worked hard, but for whom I have not been able to procure any good establishment.

M. de Montazet's despatch gives me much ill-humour and uneasiness about the rest of the campaign. You can assure their Imperial Majesties that you and I will be the firmest supporters of the alliance in the king's Council; it has need of none with the king, but it can be efficaciously supported only by a better direction of affairs. You can, with all confidence, call M. de Montazet to Vienna, and give him the title of minister plenipotentiary, which will be very suitable. The king is informed of all this. I advise you to put all the diligence you can into your last arrangements with the Court of Vienna. *Take its words, you are working for yourself.* With regard to your house, you will have all the means in the world to make arrangements that are favourable to your pecuniary affairs.

I wish Maréchal Daun may not get, himself, or let the army of the Empire get, a box on the ears. That would

bring down the pride of the Court of Vienna, but it would greatly increase that of the King of Prussia, affect the continuation of the war, if that be resolved upon, but not accelerate a peace, inasmuch as the King of Prussia will recover his superiority.

I believe you are well convinced of my attachment and sincere friendship; it can end only with my life. I am going to work at the restoration of my health. It would be useless to have obtained the title of cardinal merely to adorn my epitaph.

You have heard, no doubt, of the adventure of the King of Portugal. They say it was a mistake of the queen, his wife, who is jealous, and thought she was getting her rival killed. However that may be, the king has declared her regent during his illness. With regard to Spain, I am filled with horror and pity. I know not where it will end.

You can tell the empress-queen that the king will, very willingly, give her the title of Apostolic. In asking her what ambassador or minister would be most agreeable to her, you will have the skill to make her feel that such consultation is not a right acquired for the future, but is only a personal mark of the king's friendship.

LXXXII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

October 11, 1758.

I went to bed at eleven o'clock, precisely, because my red hat did not prevent me from having a pain in my liver. My Eminence perspired greatly during the night. He has great need that the king should have the kindness to allow him time to recuperate, and follow a course of remedies. Though the letter which his Majesty has done me the

honour to write to me does not say that he continues me in my place in the Council, I think I ought to suppose it, as he says nothing to the contrary. Your packet reached me at eight o'clock this morning. I congratulate you on the fine weather, and wish, for you and for myself, some good news which will enable us to pass the winter tranquilly.

I warn you that the suspension of the commission to verify the debts of the navy is having a bad effect on the public mind. Without upsetting everything, it would be well to establish one commission in each port to preside over purchases.

LXXXIII.

Saturday, October 14.

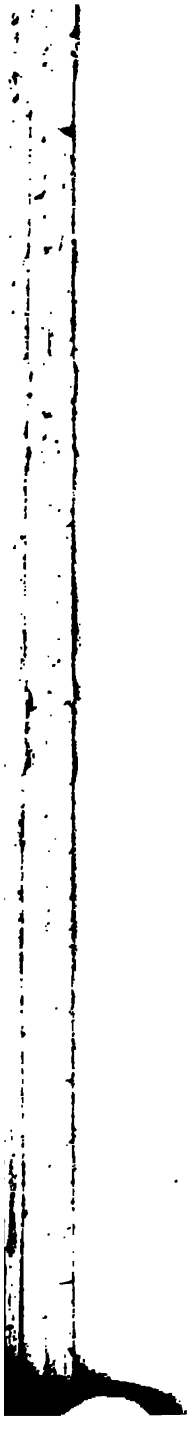
I ought to speak to you frankly. Therefore I shall answer a sentence in your letter of yesterday.

You say that I "must expect the general surprise after being loaded with favours from the king." It seems from this that in resigning my office as minister of Foreign Affairs I incur the blame of ingratitude to the king. Such a judgment may be that of my enemies; it cannot be that of Europe, nor of the kingdom.

In Europe they will think two things: that my resignation is either the beginning of disgrace, or else a weakening in the political system of the king. The first opinion will injure my credit only, and it is easy to change it. The second deserves more attention, and it exacts for a long time the greatest harmony between M. de Choiseul and me; without which the Courts of Europe, as you cannot doubt, will not know what to expect.

Neither you nor the king have told me whether I am to remain in the Council. If I am to remain, all idea must be removed of my having lost the confidence of my master, without which I had better retire to Vic-sur-Aisne, or to my

Mme de Pompadour



family. I have the confidence of parliament, and that of one-half of the clergy. I can therefore maintain the kingdom in peace; but if I am charged with that duty, my credit must be sustained, and I must be enabled to live decently at Court.

In quitting the ministry of Foreign Affairs I give up a salary of 60,000 francs. Here is what remains to me: Saint-Médard, which brings in 30,000 francs, net; Trois-Fontaines, 50,000 francs, net (but this I do not receive for another year); La Charité, 16,000 francs. The king knows that the proper allowance of a cardinal is 50,000 crowns a year. Thus I am fifty thousand francs, at least, short of what is necessary to maintain the dignity of my station.

A regular abbey, which can only be possessed by a monk or a cardinal, would give me the means of living according to my station without costing the king anything. Meantime, I owe M. de Montmartel two hundred thousand francs, and shall soon owe him three hundred thousand for the expense I must incur for the pope's chamberlain [a necessary cost of a cardinal's establishment]. One cannot receive the revenue of an abbey for eighteen months; and I have not long had them — I mean, abbeys. I have made, I think, an honourable expenditure at Court; I have furnished my apartments at the Palais Bourbon, at Versailles, Fontainbleau, and Compiègne. You know that I have had no benefits from the king; thus you cannot be astonished at my debts, not having had time to receive my revenues, but being obliged as minister of State to incur great expenses.

But you also know that I quitted the ministry of Foreign Affairs because my health is greatly injured, and also because I am too honest and too honourable a man to keep charge of an office I am no longer able to sustain. I could not continue to fail in keeping engagements which I had con-

tracted, without injury to the credit of the king, and without dishonouring myself personally. I have not the power of arranging the finances, and I have not enough strength over myself to break my word without anguish. M. de Choiseul, on entering office, can make new arrangements; and if any one can put the affairs of the kingdom on a better footing, it is he, by his talent, by the zeal with which I will second him if he so wills it. Besides which, he does not think the peace as necessary as I do; and he is, consequently, more in a state to bear the continuation of the war. Those were my reasons. *It must be intended to misunderstand me wilfully to attribute my retirement to ingratitude.*

The favours which the king has granted me have all been determined by circumstances, and necessary to the public service. After three years of an embassy, in which I was successful, I was given an abbey with a revenue of thirty thousand francs. I was forty years old and destined to the embassy in Spain. That favour, which cost the king nothing, was justice. The king made me enter his Council because he had charged me with all the affairs of Europe, and M. Rouillé refused to give me knowledge of them. You know what trouble you had to induce the king to do so. His service required it. It was not my fault that M. Rouillé had apoplexy, and that, *against my wish and my inclinations*, it was necessary to charge me with his department; in which I have ruined my health, and incurred indispensable debts. The king has honoured me with his Orders after three years of embassy, eighteen months of ministry, and after making treaties which have changed the face of Europe. Our faults and our misfortunes have not prevented that all whom I armed are still in the field, and all those whom I rendered neutral are neutral still. MM. de Baschi, de Broglie, and d'Aubeterre have each received the *cordon bleu;* can the

king, without ill-treating me or taking from me the consideration due to high stations, refuse me that favour? He gave me the abbey of Trois Fontaines to prevent my being ruined. I maintain my whole family, who are poor; I have never asked for anything which was charged to the State. With regard to the abbeys, it is better to give them to those who are useful than to those who are good for nothing. *As for the hat*, you know that neither you, nor the king, nor I ever dreamed of it. I did a service to the late pope in Venice; he wished to show me his gratitude, and the king very kindly consented. *It is one hat the more for France.* I believe that I can be more useful in a Conclave than Cardinals de Luynes or de Gesvres.

Thus the great affairs with which I have been charged have rendered necessary, as it were, the favours with which the king has loaded me. I have not bought them by vile things. I owe all to the kindness of the king, to your friendship, and much to circumstances.

It has seemed to me necessary to place this record before your eyes in order that you may not lose sight of my true state and my true way of thinking. I am as jealous of your esteem as I am of your friendship, and the slightest word on your part which may have a double meaning renders me uneasy because I believe I deserve that you should have a good opinion of me. I care greatly for that of honest men, but very little for the rash judgments of Court and public. I shall have the honour to see you this evening.

LXXXIV.

To the King.

October 15, 1758.

I executed the orders of Your Majesty last Wednesday, and I sent to Vienna by courier a copy of the letter with which it pleased you, Sire, to honour me on the 9th of this month, in order that the Duc de Choiseul should be prepared to properly present your intentions to the Court of Vienna.

It is more to be desired than ever that the said Court should feel the necessity of giving peace to Europe. Its courage, and its hatred to the king of Prussia blind it; it does not sufficiently feel that its allies are becoming exhausted and disgusted, and that France in particular is in danger of losing her colonies in order to avenge the personal quarrel of the empress. I persist in believing, Sire, *that the most statesmanlike stroke of all would be to make peace this winter and bring our allies to consent to it.* Where shall we find the men and the money to continue the war? However, Sire, the Duc de Choiseul, who has much intelligence and knows your allies well, will henceforth give Your Majesty better counsel than mine, and I will yield willingly to his opinion *when he knows as well as I do the situation of your affairs.*

I confine myself to-day to representing to Your Majesty the necessity of putting life into the navy, which is now a body without a soul. Without overthrowing everything, life could be given to this benumbed service, and I venture to assure Your Majesty that there is not a moment to lose.

Your Council represented to Your Majesty that it was indispensable to settle the old debts in order to employ the funds of the navy in the payment of sailors, workmen, and

armaments. Your Majesty appointed a commission, which is now suspended because the gentlemen of the navy did not wish for it. Madame de Pompadour will make M. Le Normand resign whenever Your Majesty commands it. M. de Massiac (who is a good man, but without ideas or imagination) should be surrounded by active men, capable of projects susceptible of execution.

None of your ministers will propose to you anything about all this, because no one will take the responsibility of results. For myself, Sire, who may be mistaken as much as any other man, I think I ought to tell you what I believe to be for the good of your service. I shall always do the same; otherwise I should not feel that I had done my duty.

The navy must be got into order, either by keeping M. de Massiac or by dismissing him. In the latter case there ought to be chosen and ready some excellent man as minister of the navy, and *no mistake made about him.*

The sailors choose above others M. de Blénac, but I know nothing about him and will not answer for him in any way.

The public chooses from among the robe M. de Silhouette; I believe him to have genius, and perhaps he may have all that is needed to re-establish that administration. But he is one of the young men, he will displease the older officers, and I am not ignorant that he has enemies who do not speak well of his character. I have asked for the facts against him; I own that no one has as yet cited any.

I read to Your Majesty the other day at the Council a memorial by M. de Monclar. He is an enlightened man who could be useful to you here in more ways than one; he is a gentleman, fitted to occupy a great place. He knows, moreover, the personnel of the navy as well as its bureaus. I think this choice a very good one, barring any objections which may escape me.

You have, Sire, under your hand, M. Berryer. He is in your Council, and for the last two months has been occupied with all that concerns the navy. I should give him the preference over all the others if I did not doubt whether he would saddle himself with such a burden. Your Majesty alone could exact it, but I am convinced he would yield, not only to your orders, but to your desires, if he were convinced that Your Majesty placed confidence in him. M. Berryer could choose among the most intelligent officers of the navy those who could best aid him.

In case, on the contrary, M. de Massiac should be kept in office either from the difficulty of finding a successor, or to avoid such frequent changes among the ministers, I confidently propose to Your Majesty as his assistant and to work under his orders, the Baron de Narbonne, who should be at the head of the ordnance and be made a post-captain. This favour is due to him, for his juniors have received it. He is a man of great mind and the highest courage. The Chevalier de Mirabeau would be excellent at the head of the classes, and I think that M. de Bompar, who has a good mind and a sound head, would do well for the colonies, which he knows and has governed. From all these a good council could be made for the present minister, to which might be added Silhouette, to regulate whatever concerns expenses.

That, Sire, is what I think, having no other interest in the matter than the good of your service.

Question your ministers on the same subject and decide promptly, for the candle is burning at both ends.

Mme de Pompadour

us jubilant, and we never consider the frightful state into which new disasters may throw us. It is now two months that I have vainly urged the rousing of the navy from its torpidity. They have wasted them, those two months, in dissertations. The finest memorials have been made, but not one word that they contained has been executed.

I repeat: you alone can, by guiding Mme. de Pompadour, guide the king. It is for this reason that I consider your prompt return indispensable. If you can get the peace determined on you will do a great service to the State, and avoid for yourself many embarrassments. If you cannot succeed, try at least to simplify the system and lessen the burden of it. I have begged the king to inform the dauphin. I must also, within a few days, inform M. de Staremberg, for Comte Kaunitz will write to him the moment you open the matter to him. I think it necessary to firmly establish in the eyes of Europe our union and concert, lest the other Courts take umbrage.

It is certain that I can no longer sustain the daily work that I do, with the trouble of mind and anxieties that I have over our total lack of government. Thus, if it were not you, it must have been some other; for, in fact, we must be masters of that we govern, or else — leave it alone. I have attained to great fortune by the force and luck of circumstances. Nothing is so keen in my mind as the desire to show my gratitude to the king. But one sentiment above all others makes me renounce the dignities of the world rather than compromise my honour. I see that I am not master of things in a way to maintain my credit and my reputation; nothing in the world could make me retain a helm which is shaking in my hands. Neither is it my nature to struggle against intrigue. I hold to the Court solely through ambition; therefore nothing will be easier to

me than to quit it; private life suits me better than any other. *Either do great things or plant my cabbages.* That's my motto, and I shall take no other.

The affair of M. de Soubise gives me great pleasure [battle of Lutzelburg]; it was a rout rather than a defeat. We took fourteen hundred prisoners, and twenty-two cannon; a good piece of work. It is long since we have had such a triumph. Adieu, Monsieur le duc; I am your friend for life.

LXXXVI.

To Madame de Pompadour.

October 26, 1758.

As the courier for Vienna does not start until to-morrow, I have not as yet sent the draft of the king's answer to the empress. You will find it inclosed herewith.

We have received from Brussels the copy of a letter from a Hanoverian officer, rendering an account to Prince Ferdinand of the victory of M. de Soubise. He admits that they lost six thousand men. In Brussels they think us very modest in our reports. I have spread this to-day at dinner.

Here's a fine thing! M. de Massiac came to see me this morning. I had spoken, in consequence of our arrangement, to MM. de Narbonne and Mirabeau. M. Berryer had already spoken to the first, whom he knows. Happily, I had asked them for secrecy; meantime I was making them work at a plan of operations I had agreed upon with M. de Beauval, whom I had sent on a mission to Bordeaux to arrange with Gradis, the ship-owner.

The arrangement with that honest Jew was made, when M. de Massiac came to see me. He surprised me much when I spoke to him of those gentlemen by saying that he needed no one; that those gentlemen would be useless to him; that

the empress supposes that I said to her ambassador. The empress is hasty, and the word *peace*, no matter in what sense you use it, embitters her.

I profited by this explanation to confide to M. de Staremberg the secret of my successor, for he could be informed of it at any moment by Count Kaunitz. M. de Staremberg is very much afraid that I shall retire altogether, and I had much trouble in making him believe that M. de Choiseul and I would act in concert together, and that there would be neither jealousy nor distrust between us. He ended by being convinced, or, at least, he seemed to me to be so.

I am impatiently awaiting news of the army. What troubles me most is that I see no firm action in the navy, and no solid arrangement in the finances. However, while telling the truth always to the king and to you, I shall carefully keep myself in future from meddling in anything. My red hat may frighten many people, which assuredly is not my desire nor my design.

Montmartel came to work with me over the subsidies, which are much in arrears. He treats me better than he did in the past. God grant us means to bear this burden! I await M. de Choiseul with impatience. In Paris people are talking of his return, but they do not say why. It is important that the dauphin should be informed of it.

You are my sponsor; I add that title to all the others that you possess, and will forever preserve in my heart and to my gratitude.

Will Your Excellency kindly say to the king that the assembly of the clergy, in spite of a few little storms, is going on well? Cardinal de Tavannes will submit to His Majesty certain memorials, and His Majesty will be pleased to tell him that an answer will be made as soon as he has examined the papers seriously.

LXXXVII.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

October 29, 1758.

You can well believe, Monsieur le duc, that we are awaiting news of you with impatience. I have informed M. de Staremberg of my retirement from the Foreign Affairs. He is very glad that you are to be my successor, but he fears the change may occasion trouble in general affairs, or, at least, cause a dread of it. I have reassured him as to the conformity of our principles, and still more as to our friendship, which is the base of them. The dauphin was greatly surprised at my retirement, and Madame de Pompadour said to me the other day that the surprise was general, *seeing me loaded with the benefits of the king.* It would be judging me very ill to attribute to ingratitude the cessation of my work in this office. I saw visibly that I could not obtain what was necessary to do that work properly, and I think there is no man in France but you who can obtain it. There is my determining motive; that of my health is on the second line. I should have well known how to sacrifice my life to the State, but I could not sacrifice my reputation.

Our pledges are too heavy, Monsieur le duc, and our administration is too bad. Where shall we find four hundred millions for the coming year? That is what the general expenditure will amount to. Without commerce, without a harvest, it will be very difficult, not to say impossible. The king runs the risk of an uprising of his kingdom. If he abandons his navy he loses his whole power and all his influence. That is why you have seen me, for a year past, so rabid for peace — *because I see no means of meeting our engagements for the present war.* Therefore, do the best you

can in Vienna; but so that the king shall not be left in servile dependence on his allies. That state would be worst of all.

As for me, seeing that I am withdrawn into the Council only, people will not fail to say that I am dismissed, unless the king gives me other work to do. There are those who think that he will give me the Seals (which he can hardly keep in his own hands perpetually),[1] in order to preserve my influence in the parliaments, and strengthen that which I am beginning to have with the clergy. Turn this idea over in your head. I have mentioned it to no one, as I did not myself think of it. There are examples of cardinals who were Keepers of the Seals. Moreover, in giving up my office I shall have eighty thousand francs a year the less, and one hundred thousand francs of debt the more. I still owe for my establishment, and the hat will cost me a hundred thousand francs at least, as much in Rome as here at Court; and the pope's chamberlain is a great expense. That is my situation. I do not know what they will do for me on my retirement, but it must be something. If the idea that has been given me suits you, I leave you to propose it. As for pensions from the king, I do not wish them, and I should be very sorry if any one proposed them.

Send me word in what way you wish me to write to the foreign Courts and announce my retirement and your accession.

M. Le Normand, who was only a bad clerk, full of haughtiness and no views, is gone. M. de Massiac, who is nothing but a log of wood, will not allow himself to be guided by men of talent and merit. That whole navy department, which ought to be in the greatest activity to-day, is in total

[1] After the dismissal of M. de Machault the king kept the Seals in person, and used them on certain appointed days.— Fr. Ed.

languor. They may turn round the pot as much as they like, but there is no government here, and we must have one. This is now your work, and it might have been mine if the devil had not meddled with it, and if I could have put more art into my manner of telling the truth. What gives me great pleasure in the new arrangement is that affairs will be in good hands, and that I do not risk hurting our friend, whom I love, or seeming to fail her, when I am really seeking only her happiness, which is to-day dependent on public affairs.

I am expecting letters from you with the most lively impatience. Here is the letter of the king to the empress, his answer to Maréchal Daun, and mine.

LXXXVIII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

October 30, 1758.

I have the honour to send you, madame, a little memorial which you will kindly give to the king after your supper, in order that I may be promptly informed of his intentions. I had told M. de Staremberg that I should work (being in the Council) in concert with the Duc de Choiseul and with the most perfect harmony. You know that this was a condition which M. de Choiseul took the liberty of proposing to the king; I may even add, for the good of the thing, that were it otherwise there might have been vexatious difficulties in the foreign affairs. But as you have made me no answer on this point, which I have mentioned to you in two letters, and as you said to me in the evening that you knew nothing about it, I think it is time to clear up the matter, inasmuch as the emperor's ambassador is already informed by the Court, and the public soon will be. I will come for an answer after supper.

LXXXIX.

To the King.

October 30, 1758.

Your Majesty, in announcing to me, by the letter with which you honoured me on the 9th of this month, the permission Your Majesty gave me to place in the hands of the Duc de Choiseul the department of Foreign Affairs, which the failure of my health, and other matters mentioned in my memorial, had made too onerous upon me, did not say if I might retain my place in your Council, or if your intention was that I should retire completely. It is necessary that I should be informed of Your Majesty's will in this matter, in order that I may change my language towards the foreign ministers and the European Courts with whom I have pending negotiations. I should never have asked to quit the department confided to me if I could have hoped to fulfil its pledges; but Your Majesty to-day owes twenty-one millions of arrearage on the subsidies, and the lack of money to pay that sum forces me to break my word weekly.

If I remain in the Council and work in concert with the Duc de Choiseul (as he himself has asked), it will be easy to remove all uneasiness in the allied Courts, who have confidence in me. If, on the contrary, Your Majesty's intention is that I should retire altogether, will Your Majesty have the kindness to prescribe to me the language I am to use in announcing my retirement, as well as the designation of my successor.

I entreat Your Majesty to be so kind as to give me your orders.

XC.

To Madame de Pompadour.

November 3, 1758.

I have executed your commands, and, thanks to the little note which accompanied your letter to M. de Choiseul, I did not open it, according to my laudable custom. I sent your letter immediately to M. de Saint-Florentin.

Though on all sides they have done their best to put us on bad terms together, I still rely on your friendship and your esteem, and you can be very sure that until death you will have upon my heart, which is honest, very extensive rights.

In consequence, I shall speak to you plainly of my affairs, about which I shall say a word to the king on Sunday when I work with him. I beg you to let him know of this.

I think that His Majesty is satisfied with my services. For three years I have done an immense labour, and though events and all the departments have thwarted mine, it is the only one which, in the state to which we are reduced, has kept its reputation.

All retirement makes a disagreeable impression, and inasmuch as the king wishes me to work in concert with the Duc de Choiseul, and to manage the ecclesiastical and parliamentary affairs, my credit must be sustained. I desire, therefore, that on the day when I resign my office, the king will have the kindness to give me the *grandes entrées*,[1] as

[1] The entries to the king were four in number: (1) the familiar, (2) the *grandes entrées*, (3) the first entries, and (4) the entries to the chamber. The first was when the king awoke, and was still in bed; the second, that of the first gentlemen of the Court, after the king had risen; the third, after he had risen, and had put on his dressing-gown; the fourth, when seated in his arm-chair before his toilet-glass. — Fr. Ed.

he has to Maréchal de Belleisle. This favour would be the most precious of all, as it brings me nearer to my master.

I hope that the king will allow me to keep my apartment at the Palais-Bourbon; for I have spent two hundred thousand francs in furnishing it.

My Eminence, in this new quality, has need of a decent lodging at Versailles. Foreign ministers will sometimes dine with me, and the clergy also; I must keep a table for them.

In resigning the office of minister of Foreign Affairs, I shall have one hundred and thirteen thousand francs less income. I have only just begun to receive the revenue of the abbey of Saint-Médard, and I do not receive anything from that of the Trois-Fontaines until June of next year. Meanwhile the visit of the pope's chamberlain, and the other expenses in receiving the hat, will cost me at least one hundred thousand francs. *I hope that the king will give me an abbey when a suitable one falls vacant;* and I wish it may be a regular abbey [*abbaye régulière*], which can be given only to monks and cardinals, so that I may not tread upon the heels of others.

The king desires that the debts I have contracted for his service should be paid. I will arrange for that with the controller-general, and M. de Montmartel. I have never asked, during the time I have been in office, for any gratuity; but the universe knows that I have lived well in it. M. Rouillé, when he was transferred from the navy department to the Foreign Affairs, received two hundred thousand francs.

There, madame, is a statement of my condition and my wishes for an arrangement. I tell you this in confidence, and ask you from friendship to incline the king in my favour on matters so just and reasonable.

Here are the arrangements for the navy:—

The Baron de Narbonne will have the direction of the ordnance, and be made a post-captain; the Chevalier de Mirabeau that of the classes; and if M. de Bompar can be replaced by any other officer suitable to command a squadron, he will be made director of the colonies.

M. Berryer assembles all these gentlemen with the Maréchal de Conflans [vice-admiral of France] on Sunday to obtain their opinions.

XCI.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

November 3, 1758.

I received your courier yesterday, of whose fantastic adventure the big Collet will inform you. I lose not a moment in sending you your letters of recall. I have made a full confidence to M. de Staremberg. I present you to him, and to the other foreign ministers as an intimate and firm friend, with whom their concert will be naturally established. I have used the same language towards all the Courts. This is necessary as a beginning.

After this, I shall mingle in your affairs only as much or as little as you desire — be very sure of this: first, I have confidence in your management, and you will not need counsel; second, my nature leads me to wish to live tranquilly. Yours is less easily affected; you are more cheerful than I, and more fitted to resist great storms. May God maintain you in joy and health — for you will need them.

The King of Prussia, in making peace, may procure it for us with England; but I announce to you that, without some startling miracle, we shall lose Canada. *You will perform a master-work if you sustain the war one year without losing our colonies.*

M. Berryer is minister of the navy. He is to be assisted by intelligent and courageous officers. But it is difficult to repair what five or six ministers have spoiled. I think *peace as necessary for the common cause as for us*, because, if the empress were to lose a great battle, all would go down at once. Now, when anything depends on a single event it is in a bad way. No one is, and no one ought to be, more attached to the alliance than I, but my mind cannot rest on future contingencies; it needs assurances, moral at least, to tranquillize it. The whole universe could not prevent me from speaking my mind on matters of State, at the risk of displeasing. I am very glad that their Imperial Majesties do me justice. I shall act to them as I do to my master, to whom I never disguise the truth. You can readily believe that there are many to whisper in my ear that you will not be united with me two weeks. It makes no impression on me. I believe you are my friend, I am yours; all is said.

I shall leave you only my heavy furniture, because I have to furnish my apartment at Versailles. With regard to my two secretaries, they will not embarrass you; I have arranged for them until I can find them places. I will answer to you for the Abbé de La Ville [head clerk of the ministry of Foreign Affairs]. Bussy is not very well, and wants to go away; I have prevented that, for he is very necessary to you until the peace. Tercier works rapidly; his work must be overlooked, but he is docile; the bureaus in general are well set-up and very tranquil. My maxim has always been to be answerable myself to the king, and to make the bureaus answerable to me through their chiefs. This done, I have left the chiefs masters of their subalterns. I believe that method to be a good one.

As for all the rest, you have reason to laugh at public

outcries, and to expect them. I have reflected on that idea of the Seals, of which I wrote to you; it is worth nothing, and I do not want them. I want a good abbey in Flanders. If the king wishes me to guide his clergy I shall need the distribution of benefices; the Bishop of Orléans neither has nor ever will have consideration; but as to that, I am in no hurry. The interests of the State will decide it. *My proper course is to be a tranquil cardinal.*

Monteil should have the title of ambassador; that is necessary in Poland. The king feels the necessity. He will have his letters for it, but will not use them until he sets up his establishment in a suitable manner. *He is a good fellow.* The Bishop of Laon deserves the ecclesiastical *cordon bleu;* he needs to be aided by an abbey. Those are all my arrangements. I await you with impatience, and I promise you always the truest friendship and the most immovable attachment.

Your arrangement for Montazet is very good. Next week M. de Staremberg shall have his October quarter. "'T is thus that I bid him farewell."

XCII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

PARIS, November 8, 1758.

I beg you, madame, to tell the king that the King of Prussia retires into Silesia, and Maréchal Daun is following him. A letter to me from M. de Choiseul of the 28th announces this. The siege of Olmütz, which was only a sham, will be raised. We shall see what will come of these events.

Among all the impertinent tales which have agitated Paris about me, the most general, and the one which has

made the most impression on the clergy, on parliament, and on the foreign ministers is that I am, or am about to be, dismissed, and that I have lost the confidence of the king. I foresaw this, and I warned you that this would be the point on which the foreign Courts and the two bodies of the kingdom would fasten. I have succeeded in destroying the impression. I have announced to the foreign ministers, from the king, that the closest union would reign between M. de Choiseul and me, and that he himself had desired and exacted it. That assurance has reassured in a great measure their political heads.

I have also reassured parliament and the clergy by letting them know that the king wishes me to continue to negotiate *the delicate affairs* with M. de Saint-Florentin, Cardinal de Tavannes, and the Bishop of Orléans. I have calmed Montmartel and inclined him to an arrangement which will put M. de Choiseul at his ease. In a word, I have dispersed all the clouds.

The real fact is, madame, that truth and honesty have been the basis of my sentiments and my conduct; and it is quite simple that those principles have won me confidence. My enemies, yours, those of the State make it a crime in me to have won it. I shall never use it except in the service of the king. I believe firmly that M. de Choiseul, united with me, will make the welfare of the country. This union is necessary because he has enemies; and confidence is established little by little. I have declared to the bishops, the foreign ministers, and to others my attachment to you, and my gratitude. Put aside the reports and evil confidences which are seeking to disunite us. I am attached to you for life. Your happiness depends on that of the State. The king has confidence in you; have confidence yourself in your old friends, ministers of the king; do not allow that confi-

dence to be changed by the harm that malignity tries to do them, and all will be well.

I beg you to obtain for me the apartment [at Versailles] of Maréchal de Noailles. A cardinal-minister in whose apartment the committees meet ought to be suitably lodged. I have written about it to the Comte de Noailles. I spoke to you of the *grandes entrées* which were given to the Comte d'Argenson on the dismissal of his brother. My object has been to put an end in this way to these reports about my disgrace, for I think it very important to do so. Still, we must not harass our master.

Whatever may be said, madame, I love you and am devoted to you for life.

XCIII.

November 9, 1758.

I am very glad that you have never doubted my heart. It is only too good, for it is killing me. I see but two women of my old acquaintances in Paris; one is Mme. de Chabannes, who has much intelligence, and who swears to me that she has never said a word which could do wrong to my sentiments for you. I believe her, because she has friendship for me and intelligence. The other, Mme. de Forcalquier, I see only among five or six foreign ministers. But there is a crowd of my old acquaintance who fancy that they give themselves credit by saying they are friends of mine. For their remarks I cannot answer. In general, many persons have thought they would do a great deed by making us quarrel, you and me. Only yesterday Maréchal de Belleisle came to tell me it was reported that I had said I resigned "because I wished to make peace and you would not hear of it." I took the course of speaking openly at the Council, and very firmly,

on that impertinence. I have never spoken of what relates to peace except at the Council or to the ministers in discussing affairs and our situation.

I accuse no one, because I do not wish to increase the chaos; it is sufficient for me to tell you that all persons who wish you to think them honest are not honest. I hope that the firmness and clearness with which I explain myself will disconcert the petty craft and treachery of certain persons.

As for M. de Choiseul, you must undeceive Maréchal de Belleisle; they have told him so much evil that he knows not what to think. Do you even imagine what it is, this horrible country? They have written to M. de Choiseul some two hundred times that I have vilified him and am endeavouring to ruin him. *You know* what has been my conduct and my opinion of him. The great point is that we are united, he and I, for the good of the king's service and to give M. de Choiseul time to acquire the confidence of the foreign ministers and their Courts. Thus, I have thought it necessary to proclaim as strongly as I can our concert and union.

I hope that the memorial of the Archbishop of Paris will not appear.

The English squadron has sailed; it is certain that it will attack either Martinique or Guadeloupe.

Our committee of yesterday was very sad. We must find two hundred and forty millions of extra funds. It is impossible.

M. Berryer takes well. His first interview with naval men succeeded; also the letters he has written. Great God! what a difference there would be had he succeeded M. de Machault!

It is certain that the Maréchal de Noailles has given

up his apartment; I beg you to speak of it to the Comte de Noailles.

I take it much to heart that the Maréchal de Belleisle does not remember to give a regiment to my nephew the Comte de Narbonne, who is more than thirty-four years old and has served since he was sixteen or eighteen, and made the report [*détail*] on the infantry with the greatest distinction. He gave him a pension, which was very well; but a man of his rank and the nephew of the king's minister ought not to remain a mere captain of infantry. The maréchal promised me, but he will let himself forget it unless you say a word to him — but without any complaint on my part.

M. de Puysieux wants to have M. d'Ossun [ambassador to Naples] sent to Vienna. I understood that from the preamble the former made me on the subject. I am veracious. I answered him that the King of Spain might die or abdicate, and therefore it would be folly not to leave M. d'Ossun to follow the King of Naples to Spain. The Court of Vienna prefers M. d'Aubeterre, who is a man of good sense, who will never do anything but what we wish him to do. I am sure of what I say to you there. Besides, the Court would never be much pleased with any one connected with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

I congratulate Your Excellency on the beautiful day you will have at Saint-Ouen and I beg you to love me always.

I go to-night to Versailles.

XCIV.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

November 12, 1758.

You have rightly divined, Monsieur le duc, the outcries excited by your ministry, and the end of mine. But it became important for the king's interests to reassure the foreign ministers. I read them the clause in your letter which concerns them, and I declared to them that the king's intention, like your own, was that you and I should act in a perfect harmony of principles and sentiments. That was necessary in the first moments, and the effect will last usefully some time, until you have acquired their confidence and they know from you that the promise I gave them will be fulfilled.

The Council approved of this, and wished me to reassure their minds, which were much startled. Our affair has been managed very secretly, and has therefore caused great surprise and alarm in the different orders. They did not know if it was disgrace, or disgust on my part, or a Court intrigue. I told you that all were conspiring here to put us on bad terms together; the good of the cause, and the friendship that allies us make it equally impossible. But there are, even in the Council, men whose talent lies in making false confidences in order to gain true ones, and who subsequently (by changing a few words) falsify what was said to them. They want, in a word, to embroil affairs by embroiling persons.

A rumour has been set going in Paris purporting to quote what I said to the foreign ministers. The Bishop of Évreux will tell you all about it. I have neither impertinence in my nature, nor folly in my mind; therefore

I shall not defend myself from such dull nonsense. announced, by order of the king, to all the Courts that greatest harmony existed between us. You desired this; was necessary; it bound you to nothing, for assuredly y know my sentiments well enough to be certain that I not resign to retain.

Besides, if I had known any other man in France mo or as capable as you for this work, I should have propos him after seeing your great repugnance to it. I am yo friend; I shall always be so; I am under obligations to y and I say so; therefore I shall mingle in your affairs or as much as suits you, and as much as pleases you. *This my last declaration on this point.*

Your despatch succeeded well. They hope here that y will make good arrangements before your departure, and tl you will make the king as independent as he ought to be.

I promise you *friendship and union;* there is my co fession of faith.

You will find our friend and me much at our ease. Ind creet and malignant persons have said many things tl tended to make us quarrel, but happily they have n succeeded.

XCV.

To Madame de Pompadour.

November 14, 1758.

I saw the controller-general yesterday, madame, a asked him if he had taken the king's orders for the arrang ment of my debts. He told me that His Majesty had n plied: "All that will be arranged with M. de Montmartel."

Here, then, madame, is the arrangement I propose: I ow at the present moment one hundred thousand francs

M. de Montmartel, and I am about to borrow one hundred thousand more to receive and entertain the pope's chamberlain.

If the king will permit me to do so, I will make a draft to bearer of one hundred thousand francs, and I will write on behalf of His Majesty a letter to M. de Montmartel to assure him that in case of my death His Majesty will be accountable for the hundred thousand francs which Montmartel will now lend me. If I die, the bursary officers will take possession of all my effects, and Montmartel would then lose his money; if I live (as the king is kindly willing to give me an abbey in Flanders, or elsewhere to enable me to support the rank of cardinal and minister), I shall pay M. de Montmartel from my revenues.

To-day it is impossible for me to do so. I do not receive the full income of my abbeys until the month of June. I must live, and I must spend money in the meantime. My house must be open to the clergy, and the foreign ministers. It is necessary that the king in his kindness should sustain my dignity, without which I should be useless to him.

Therefore, madame, I entreat you to be so kind as to propose to the king, and induce him to agree to the above arrangement, which is very simple, and will relieve me from reducing my household, and selling my plate, which could not fail to produce a bad effect upon the public mind.

I beg you also to say to the king that among my colleagues it is whispered about "that the king is displeased with me for having asked to be relieved of the Foreign Affairs." As to this I would say: —

1. When I asked the king for that permission, I explained to him the reasons which concerned his service, and also those which concerned myself alone.

2. The letter that his Majesty wrote to me on the 9th of October, is full of kindness, and even familiarity, and never has the king treated me better than he did from that period until the arrival of the courier of M. de Choiseul. It is true that since then every one has thought that the king was out of humour; *but after his letter, and a whole month of kindness, I could not take his gloom to myself.*

3. If the king had not thought my reasons good he was master of commanding me to remain in my office. If he thought my reasons equivocal, and the choice I proposed of my successor doubtful, he would surely have consulted his ministers. I cannot have done wrong in proposing to resign, because the king, after weighing all my reasons, accepted my proposal. I shall be very unfortunate if, after the event thus accepted, they were to blacken my intentions to the king. They are pure; and in a few words, I shall here recapitulate my motives.

I saw, with all the Council, that the Court of Vienna was being allowed to break its promise of negotiating a peace this winter. I believed that peace necessary from the state of the finances, and that of the navy. I saw, with all the Council, that by presenting the idea of peace too bluntly to the empress, I had been made to seem suspicious to her. From that moment I became useless to the plan.

I felt that the subsidies must be diminished and, perhaps, that some of the treaties of that nature would have to be broken; but as I had made them, it was not possible for me to be charged with breaking them.

I was not able to bear up under the distress of having personally broken my word to Denmark, which had three times lent itself to three different arrangements with France.

I believed that, the Foreign Affairs being dependent on the

war, it was better that a military man should fill my place; because I am constantly told, as to the war, that I do not understand it for it is not my profession.

As for what concerns myself, I believed I had lost a part of your confidence, and I knew that without that I could not serve the king well. I called to the Council all your friends: I was accused of ambition and ingratitude towards you. I stripped myself in favour of your friends. But my health failed. I poisoned my life by griefs which concerned my heart. Remember the period when you ceased to show me the letters of M. de Stainville! I have always shown to you all his. From that moment I felt that I had lost your confidence. Be just; had I not reason to feel so?

To-day it is a question to know if the king believes that my counsels will be useful to him, and whether I am to stay in the Council. If he thinks me useful there, no harm has been done, but the contrary. M. de Choiseul has gifts which I have not. I may have some that are lacking to him. Let us be united — you, he, and I — and all will go well; without that, I dare not speak of the evils that I foresee, without and within.

The whole Court will, of course, seek to embroil me with my successor. I venture to say to you that nothing is more essential than our union, and that it cannot be too openly manifested.

There, madame, is the bottom of my soul; I shall always show it to you such as it is. I long only for the satisfaction of the king, the welfare of his State, and your friendship.

XCVI.

To Madame de Pompadour.

November 15, 1758.

I send to Your excellent Excellency the translation into poor French of a letter which M. Dabreu, Spanish minister in London, has sent to M. de Massonèz. I beg you to show it to the king and to M. Berryer; *it is something, at any rate.*

M. de Saint-Florentin will tell you what praises the assembly of the clergy deserves as to its conduct. I dine to-day with Cardinal de Tavannes to meet MM. the doctors of the Sorbonne; with a little patience, peace will be re-established in the kingdom.

M. de Choiseul's steward has arrived. He does not know where to put his master's furniture, because I do not know where to put mine. Madame la dauphine has ordered me to let the Comte de Clermont know, through Polignac, about his lodging, and to assure him that the Comte de Lusace [her brother, Prince Xavier of Saxony] "neither has nor makes any claim to it." That sentence will make the negotiation successful.

I beg you frankly, and in the style of our old friendship, to make the king accept the arrangement with Montmartel of which I told you in my letter of yesterday.

I like to put all my obligations into one basket. Besides, it is not just that having served well in many ways I should have the air and name of being less well treated than my colleagues. Where do you expect me to get the loan that I am forced to make? It would have been very easy for me to have had no debts had I thought of getting money as men get it to-day. But I have never known any other

way than to ask it of the king and serve him faithfully and nobly.

I assure Your Excellency of my respect.

Apropos, I warn you that it is being said (among other things) that when M. de Choiseul arrives there will be no more committee meetings. Although those meetings have so far been held in my apartment, that is not my reason for keeping them up. I think it is useful, and even indispensable that the ministers should communicate with one another, and that none should manage his department as he plants cabbages in his garden. All things depend on one another in a government; and all parts should be bound together. That is my opinion. They will, of course, do what they like now. I have taken the resolution to tell the truth always, but to oppose no one — that only displeases, and does no good.

XCVII.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

November 15, 1758.

The first malignity done to me, Monsieur le duc, has had no success. I have told my sentiments to the foreign ministers and they have all done homage to the truth. I am weary of the stupid malice of our times.

I have not, as yet, obtained my lodging in the château [of Versailles]. The Comte de Noailles is awaited to settle this great affair; but indecision leaves still undecided the question of how much furniture I can leave for you in the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I doubt if Maréchal Daun, who is marching on Dresden, will succeed in that enterprise. Nevertheless, I am very glad he has taken that course, instead of entering Silesia.

I am of your opinion about Montazet. I thought him an older brigadier-general than he is. It will not do to make enemies to our friends. He is a good soldier who will be useful to us when he has finished the work you will order him to do in Vienna.

I await you like a Messiah. I shall say no more about our union and our harmony, because they have turned that phrase into an impertinence. I have neither the taste nor the talent for being a tutor; but I assure you that you can never have a more faithful friend, because there never was a soul more sincere, more honest than mine, and I dare to say that boldly.

XCVIII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

November 16, 1758.

They say that short accounts make long friends. I add to that proverb that clear accounts are best. By what you said this morning, I see that M. Boullongne has reminded the king of the two hundred and thirty thousand francs of last year and that he has, apparently, forgotten the motives for that payment.

It is customary for the king to give to the daughter of a minister who is a secretary of State, two hundred thousand francs on her marriage. Without going farther back, the king gave that sum to Mme. de Beuvron and Mme. la Maréchale d'Estrées [daughter of M. de Puysieux]. I know this, because it was I who, on the occasion of the Treaty of Versailles (which M. Rouillé did not make), tormented you, in order to get peace, to convert the duchy which the little fellow asked for M. de Beuvron, into a pension of sixteen thousand francs, of which ten were to go to his pretty

daughter, Mme. de Beuvron, and six to the charming Comtesse de Castellane. You know that I employed the same persuasions on you for the Maréchale d'Estrées. As the parties interested have totally forgotten these services, I have forgotten them also, but what you said to me this morning about the two hundred and thirty thousand francs reminded me of them.

I asked for two hundred thousand francs for my two nieces because I have no daughter, that I know of, and that request was according to established usage. As I am very clever, I married my two nieces for one hundred thousand francs, and I employed the remaining one hundred and thirty thousand francs (I will explain about the thirty thousand presently) in paying off to M. de Montmartel a sum my brother had borrowed of him to purchase the fiefs inclosed within the estate of Saint-Marcel which our family has possessed since the year 1300.

The king gave me thirty thousand francs over and above what he gives to daughters of ministers, which I asked to pay the costs of my journey to Compiègne and Fontainebleau (where I was not bad company, so they tell me); and the only difference I made in my request was that M. Rouillé and my predecessors asked and obtained much larger sums for the same purpose.

Your Excellency sees therefore: (1) that I have received only what is usual for the king to pay his ministers; (2) that I have not profited myself, inasmuch as I gave all to my relatives; (3) that I am not a bad economist, because with the state I have kept up, and the apartments I have furnished, I owe M. de Montmartel only one hundred thousand francs; and it is not my fault that the visit of the pope's chamberlain obliges me to borrow a hundred thousand more.

I entreat Madame la marquise to mention these details

to the king, because in a matter of money I wish my master to *see clear*. As to the rest, the letter of security to Montmartel suffices me. My greatest pleasure is to serve the king without being a cost on his treasury. He will remember me and my debts when some cardinal's abbey falls vacant.

I beg you now merely to obtain for me the late lodging of the Maréchal de Noailles. The fools in parliament, the clergy, and the foreign ministers, are suspending judgment, until they see my favour, my lodgment, or my disgrace. All that concerns my public consideration is very close to my heart; that which concerns my interests does not affect me, provided I can feel easy in case of death.

Your Excellence excellentissime will pardon me these details, about which I could not do otherwise than inform you.

XCIX.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.[1]

VERSAILLES, November 29, 1758.

I offer you, my dear successor, my most sincere condolences on the loss you have just met with [the death of his mother]; though you must have expected it, I know that you feel it deeply.

Madame de Pompadour told me yesterday that you would stay in Paris until Saturday or Sunday. On Thursday I have my function for the cardinal's hat, and after that a council of State; Saturday, committee in the morning, council of despatches in the afternoon; Sunday, council of State. So you see that I can give you only Friday. If you have any need of me I will join you in Paris on that day at any hour you name, and I will go to your house.

[1] The Duc de Choiseul left Vienna November 15, and reached Paris on the 27th, his mother having died on the 25th. — TR.

I did not obtain my lodging at the château until yesterday. I have put in a number of people to get myself established as soon as possible. I expect to sleep there Saturday.

You must write a line to M. de Saint-Florentin to ask him to draw up your commission; and also take measures to replace the bond of four hundred thousand francs for the office of secretary of State [*brevet de retenue*], which Montmartel advanced to me and on which I paid him interest. He will not refuse you the same accommodation.

Those operations done, you take oath to the king, and I will make over to you, with all my heart, the helm of State. In spite of the stupidities I am quoted as saying, I shall have with you only the harmony of friendship. You have no need of a tutor; you would not wish me to be your clerk; I shall therefore be your friend, and I will always speak to you the language of truth.

It was necessary at the first moment of this new arrangement to reassure the minds of the foreign ministers and their Courts. That is done. I am now only at your orders, and I am going to turn my mind to restoring my health. I do not speak to you of business; we have time enough for that.

C.

To Madame de Pompadour.

Friday, December 9, 1758.

I send you, madame, the letters of Montazet, which M. de Choiseul has already read. You will find in them some very interesting things, though written rather lengthily.

People have thought my head excited when I saw so gloomily into the future. Little by little every one will think as I do. Well, I should be dead if I had not told the

king the truth, and I should die if I remained in charge of events I foresee must happen if peace be not quickly made, or if a better system of making war is not established. I hope that M. de Choiseul, who is a soldier, will have more influence than I could ever have as to war. But reflect in time that without money all your operations by sea and land must fail.

I have not been at my ease until the other day. You do justice to my soul. Believe that there is none more honest. In leaving the ministry of Foreign Affairs I have exposed myself to the most insulting comments; but I knew I ought to do it, for the good of the king, and nothing stopped me. I stripped myself at one and the same time of my public consideration and of a large revenue, yet they say here that I am ungrateful and ambitious. *That is absurd.*

Your friendship is the only good to which I cling. I owe to you the kindness of the king, which I value a thousand times more than the fortune I have made. It is impossible to be more philosophical than I am on all worldly honours, but not on that which touches reputation or affects my heart.

Count ever upon me as a faithful friend and an honest man, and tell me that I can equally count upon your friendship.

CI.

LETTRE DE CACHET.

To my Cousin Cardinal de Bernis.[1]

My cousin, the reiterated requests you have made me to quit the department of Foreign Affairs have convinced me that in future you would not properly fulfil the duties you desire with such ardour to get rid of. It is from that reflection

[1] Cardinals are addressed as "Cousin" by Catholic kings. This letter in the French is full of faults in spelling. It is preserved in the archives of the Château de Saint-Marcel. — TR.

that I have determined to accept your resignation as secretary of State. But I have felt at the same time that you have not responded to the confidence I have shown you in circumstances so critical, nor to the singular favours which I have accumulated upon you in so short a time. In consequence, I order you to go to one of your abbeys, whichever you choose, in twice twenty-four hours from now, without seeing any one, and until I send you word to return. Send me back the letters you have of mine, in a sealed packet.

On which I pray God to have you, my cousin, in His holy keeping.

At Versailles this 13th of December, 1758.

LOUIS.

CII.

To the King.

SIRE: PARIS, December 18, 1758.

I shall execute with the greatest respect and the greatest submission the orders of Your Majesty, and I shall go, within the prescribed time, to Vic-sur-Aisne, near Soissons, where I have a dwelling.

I asked to be allowed to resign the Foreign Affairs because I believed I had not the strength to bear the burden of them, for my health had failed to such a point that I dared not answer to Your Majesty for my work. I felt, moreover, that I could not fulfil the engagements I had contracted in matters of finance, and having broken my word, I no longer had the credit that was needful to me.

I have had no object that did not relate to your service. God has seen the bottom of my heart; Your Majesty will see it some day. My only grief is in having displeased you. But my consolation will always be that I have not failed in any of my duties towards you, unless by error.

I have burned all the letters in which Your Majesty entered upon details which marked your confidence in me. There remain a few others, which are in my portfolio at Versailles, where I will send to fetch them.

I entreat Your Majesty to be kind enough to confirm the arrangement lately made for the payment of my debts. *I do not know what course to take in reference to the pope's chamberlain.* I will endeavour to reconcile in that respect what I owe to His Holiness and to the faithful execution of your orders.

Sire, I entreat Your Majesty to be pleased to regard favourably my family and my nephews, who are serving Your Majesty with zeal.

I hope by my resignation and by my respect to deserve that Your Majesty shall do justice to my intentions, and that you will pardon faults which have never been voluntary.

I am, with the most profound respect and with the most complete submission,

Sire,

Your Majesty's
very humble and very obedient
servant and subject,
CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

P. S. I ask of Your Majesty permission to see my nephews and my brother at my abbey. I will receive no other visits. I hope that Your Majesty will not dissapprove of my men of business and my two secretaries coming to see me. I will not abuse that permission.

The Comte de Staremberg was with me when the letter of Your Majesty was brought to me. I sent him away as soon as possible; also all the persons in my antechamber. I have abstained, Sire, from seeing the pope's chamberlain,

who is living with me in this house, and I shall leave without speaking to him.

My answer has been delayed because I wished to look through my old portfolios and see if they contained any letters from Your Majesty.

CIII.

To Madame de Pompadour.

PARIS, 13th, in the evening.

I think I owe, madame, to our old friendship and to the obligations I am under to you the renewed assurance of my gratitude. It can be interpreted as you will; it suffices me to fulfil towards you the essential duty of an honourable man.

I commend to the kindness of your heart and the foundation of justice which I have always seen in you, my nephews and near relatives, — not because they belong to me, but because they are serving His Majesty well.

You know better than any one, madame, what were my motives in asking to quit my office, which I believed I could not properly fill in the future; I desired to place in it that one of your friends whom I thought the most worthy. I have always written to him and behaved to him as a brother; from his answers I had reason to believe that we should always live as such, and that consequently the king could not be better served.

In a word, madame, my intentions were upright; I have felt no distrust because I had none but honest motives, and all of them related to the service of the king. My regret is that I can never hope now to prove the infinite gratitude that I owe to his goodness.

I shall not lose the memory of my obligations to you. I

have lived too long and reflected too much not to be prepared for the malignity of my enemies; I have merited none, except through the too rapid fortune which I have made; I do not wish to know them, and I forgive them with all my heart.

I have asked of the king that my family, my business men, and my secretaries may have liberty to go to my abbey. I shall see no others (unless by permission) except the inhabitants of my village; and you may assure the king, madame, that I shall meddle in no public affairs. I have always detested intrigue, and I know my duty.

I leave my house here to the pope's chamberlain. If the king intends to dispose of the Palais-Bourbon, I entreat him to wait until the chamberlain's departure, and to be so kind as to remember that he is Cardinal Archinto's nephew, to whom Monseigneur the Bishop of Orléans has promised an abbey. That favour was granted to the Abbé Durini; and on this occasion it would not be a favour done to me, but to the envoy of the pope.

I hope that you will not think ill of my writing to you in my usual style. I change nothing because nothing is changed in me as regards you, and you ought, madame, to count always on my attachment and my respect. The king will never have a more submissive or more faithful servant, nor you a friend more grateful.

I have seen no one here but my nephew and cousin Narbonne, who was allowed to enter as my relation.

I entreat you, madame, if the king disposes of my lodging at Versailles, to give time to my servants to take away my furniture. I should be greatly inconvenienced if my lodging in the Palais-Bourbon were also taken at once. But I rely on the kindness of the king. Let some one tell me or write to me, whether the king will allow me to have my nearest

relatives with me. They are not in the social world nor in public office. I await a reply as to this.

I have the honour to address to you a packet of letters from the king, which you will please return to him. My nephew is charged to deliver them to you. He will let me know if the king allows my relatives to come and see me.

P. S. I have changed my mind, madame, and to save my nephew from being questioned, I send this letter and the package for the king to M. Janel.

CIV.

To the King.

SIRE: December 13, Evening.

I have the honour to return to Your Majesty the only letters of yours that remain to me. I have already burned all those containing private details. My attacks of giddiness made me take the precautions that we take against death.

. I have reflected, Sire; I can only have displeased Your Majesty by the air of ingratitude with which I presented my request to be allowed to resign the Foreign Affairs. It was through distrust of myself that I resigned them, not from insensibility to your kindness and confidence. I thought that another would do better than I, and that, uniting in harmony together, Your Majesty would be better served.

I have kept no papers in your hand-writing, Sire, but those that are my security for the execution of your orders. Such are all the memorials relating to the negotiations with Vienna, copies of which are in the office of the ministry. If I find later among my papers any which ought to be returned to Your Majesty personally, I shall have the honour to address them to you.

I ask pardon of Your Majesty for all my faults, and entreat you to see only my motives; they may have led me wrong, but they were pure and honest.

I am with the deepest respect and the most inviolable fidelity,

Sire,

Your Majesty's

Very humble and very obedient

subject and servant,

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

CV.

To Madame de Pompadour.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, December 16, 1758.

Your answer, madame, comforts me a little. You have not abandoned me.

At first I thought I ought to justify myself to the king. I now think it more respectful to rest on the judgment His Majesty has formed of my conduct. I enclose to you herewith a letter of submission to him. In it I ask him to take from my exile that which presents me to the eyes of Europe as a State criminal.

Does the king preserve to me my pension as minister? You know how he has treated others whom he has dismissed. I ask for that pension as a matter of honour; but it is equally necessary for my needs. You know the expenses I have had to defray, and that I do not yet receive the income of my most considerable abbey.

The king, by an order on the treasury, has secured for the present the fate of my two secretaries, both of whom were employed in the confidential affairs relating to the secret negotiations with Vienna. The controller-general may be able to relieve the king of that burden by finding them situ-

ations. I am told that Afforti is taken back to the Foreign Affairs, so that I need not speak of him.

If M. de Choiseul were not lodged, I would not ask to keep the Palais-Bourbon. But where else can I put the pope's chamberlain and my furniture? These, madame, are all my requests.

My heart is wrung for life; consulting my soul, it seems to me impossible that I could have displeased the king. Say to M. de Choiseul that I do not accuse him of having had any part in my disgrace — if it were so his last letters would be incredible; they are full of the frankest friendship; the moment of my dismissal might have been arranged with less inconvenience to him and to me.

I have written a memorial *for you alone* of the facts of which you have been a witness, and I will send it to you whenever you choose. If it is more respectful to be silent before one's master, it is permissible to justify one's self to one's friends. You will make no use of the memorial except such as you judge to be proper. I owe you that mark of confidence. I do what I can not to die of the blighting of my heart. I shall always love the king, the State, and you, madame, since you are still my friend.

CVI.

To the King.

SIRE: VIC-SUR-AISNE, December 13, 1758.

I have thought that I ought to justify myself to Your Majesty in a long letter, which I now suppress out of respect. I prefer to own that I am to blame, since, in spite of my good intentions, I have had the misfortune to displease you.

I frankly own, Sire, that I am a very bad courtier, but I

have never ceased to be a very faithful and very grateful subject. I shall never be cured, Sire, of the grief of having lost your good-will; I had so blind a confidence in it that I was prevented from supposing that I could displease you by asking for your permission to resign.

I ought to have consulted Your Majesty before taking that step; the purity of my intentions misled me. I believed, Sire, that you would read to the bottom of my heart and see it full of love and respect for your person and zeal for your service.

I do not ask Your Majesty any other favour than that of softening the idea of my blame and removing from my punishment all that can present me to the eyes of the public as a State criminal. Show that kindness, Sire, to the sacred College to which I belong, if you do not think me worthy to have it granted to myself. Do not treat me more rigorously than the other ministers you have dismissed; continue to me the favours of which you have assured me ever since you gave me permission to resign my office; allow me sometimes to render to Madame Infanta that which I owe to her of respect and gratitude; and believe, Sire, that if you were God, as you are his representative, I should never have seemed to you guilty.

I am with the most profound respect and perfect submission, Sire,

Your Majesty's

very humble, and very obedient servant,

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

P. S. — Your Majesty will remember that you approved of M. de Monteil writing me private letters on matters which related to Madame la dauphine. I recall this circumstance now lest this private correspondence should do injury to M. de Monteil.

CVII.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, December 17, 1758.

Madame de Pompadour, Monsieur le duc, will have told you the manner in which I thought of you in the first hours of my downfall. I could have wished, in order to avoid rash judgments, that the circumstances which preceded it had been announced to the public; nevertheless, we have given ourselves reciprocally such great marks of confidence and friendship that we cannot, either of us, suspect the other without great rashness.

I do not judge like the populace; I have never suspected friends. It must be, inasmuch as they did not prevent my disgrace, that they were not permitted to oppose it. The urgency with which I asked to resign my office to you has ruined me; I prove by that, in a manner very fatal to me, the confidence I had in you.

I thank you for the new marks of friendship and interest which you have been so good as to give me. I have sent word through Madame de Pompadour what I desire for myself. I have not deserved that it should be heralded throughout Europe that I have incurred the indignation of the king, more than all the other ministers whom he has dismissed. As honour is concerned in such treatment, it is very natural that I should feel uneasy.

In other respects, I desire solely the return of the king's good-will, for I regret nothing but the loss of his old way of thinking about me.

I shall profit, on occasion, by the offers you are good enough to make to me for myself, and my family. You have given me much pleasure in letting me know of the

arrangement made for the pope's chamberlain. I beg you to assure the king of my respectful gratitude. I feel the pleasure that you will feel in doing so by that which I should feel myself were I in the circumstances in which you are.

Be sure, Monsieur le duc, that I shall not fail in the friendship I promised you, and that I deserve to-day that which you again promise me, because of the inviolable attachment with which I honour you, monsieur, more than any one in the world.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

CVIII.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, December 28, 1758.

I thank you, Monsieur le duc, both for the manner in which you announced my downfall in Rome, and for the care for me which you took in making His Majesty approve of it. It is certain — no matter what persons may say or think — that the good-will of the king, and my own reputation are the things to which I am most attached.

I thank you with all my heart for having spoken to the Bishop of Orléans about the chamberlain. The answer you made to that prelate is very honourable to me. I shall offer him my thanks.

Since you are willing, with such good grace, to employ yourself in what concerns me, I shall propose to you my ideas on one of the points which I have much at heart: I mean that of my secretaries. With regard to my pension as minister, I am told that I am wrong in being troubled about that; for it will assuredly go on unless the king formally withdraws it.

I am now reducing my household, and am already well advanced in that sad work; for it is indeed painful to dis-

miss servants who have served us well, and are attached to us. My principal care now is to put in order my domestic affairs, and to provide for my poor relations in the service of the king.

I am taking exercise here even in this bad weather; and my health is the better for it.

Madame Infanta assures me strongly that I must not think that you had any share in my downfall. That honourable testimony was not necessary. You know what I think about you. I should be infinitely more unhappy if I suspected the persons in whom I have had most confidence. Therefore, from the first, I put such thoughts away from me, and I do not allow them to be mentioned to me.

I beg you, Monsieur le duc, to receive my good wishes on the occasion of the new year, and to be assured that nothing is more true than the attachment that I have for you.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

CIX.

December 29, 1758.

I was misinformed, Monsieur le duc, when I thought that my pension as minister would be given to me. I receive as yet only half my revenues, and I am obliged to keep a house in Paris for the chamberlain. The Palais-Bourbon not being allowed me, I hope they will not oblige me to dismantle it till after the departure of the Abbé Archinto. It would be very disagreeable for him to be dislodged.

The more increase of expense and diminution of funds I have, the more important it is that you should kindly protect M. le Brun, my former secretary. You were always content with his correspondence; he is highly educated, a very honourable man, and I think you could get much out of him for the king's service. I ask you as a favour to

secure to him the same salary by employing him usefully for the king.

I hope that the controller-general will be kind enough to do something for the one who has followed me into exile. He is named Deshaizes, and I think that the Abbé de la Ville will tell you only good of him. You could not do me a greater pleasure than to employ M. Le Brun and do what you usefully can for his former comrade.

Mme. de Pompadour, in her letter, seems to fear that I shall suspect you of having a share in my downfall. I have said very differently, and assuredly I am not false. I beg you to inspire in her the confidence I flatter myself that you feel in my way of thinking about you, and to be assured that if I could still give you proofs of mine I would do so with all my heart.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

CX.

To Madame de Pompadour.

December 30, 1758.

You are right, madame, in saying that I was blind to ask permission to resign my department. I thought I had the strongest reasons, all of which concerned the service of the king. I deceived myself, inasmuch as His Majesty decides otherwise; but in deceiving myself I thought I did my duty; my error, therefore, was not criminal.

I have suppressed and thrown into the fire the memorial you judge to be useless. My intention is certainly not to issue manifestoes. You know the public; I know it, too. It is impossible to ward off indiscretions and malignity. It would be too unjust to make me responsible for them. I have never had and never shall have any correspondence of

a suspicious nature. I have never wormed myself into any intrigue, and I have, thank God! no other desire than to be justified in the mind of the king. This desire is a duty. To obtain it I shall employ no means that could displease him.

I wish with all my heart I had no proprieties to fulfil. After the first complimentary letters which are customary for cardinals, I shall cut down all correspondence and write only to my relatives, and a few friends to whom I owe that mark of civility and faithfulness, and to the persons who have charge of my affairs. I would I could find some way of living without annoyance and without being misinterpreted even in my silence. But you will feel, madame, how impossible that is under the circumstances, and that the worse our misfortune is, the more false friends and dangerous enemies we have. I shall use all possible wisdom and circumspection, but, I say once more, when a man has none but good intentions he thinks himself safe under a good master. That idea is too true and too consoling to renounce; I shall preserve it preciously.

For the rest, madame, not only do I not accuse M. de Choiseul, but I am well satisfied with him; I announced and proved that I was his friend; I shall never fall back from that in regard to either him or you. When the clouds in which they have sought to envelop me disperse, I am sure that you will do me justice and pity me much. I have done all I could to make my friends and acquaintance think as I do; but I cannot answer for others; it suffices me never to have said one word in my life which did not have for its object the best service of the king and the gratitude that I owe to him and to you. If I am quoted as saying things, if I am misinterpreted or misunderstood, I protest; and with all the more confidence because no one can show

that I ever failed those who have done me the slightest service.

I wish you, madame, a happy new year, and beg you to listen to no one but yourself as regards me.

CXI.

To Monsieur le Duc de Choiseul.

VIC-SUR-AISNES, January 7, 1759.

Nothing could be more kind, Monsieur le duc, than the letter with which you honoured me on the 4th, as well as all your proceedings on my behalf. The letter which you have written to the grand-master will secure bread to my nephew the Chevalier de Narbonne.

I thank you with all my heart for what you have done and intend to do for M. Le Brun. You could not employ a man more suited to the work for intelligence and a rather large fund of knowledge. His character is very good. You can count upon his attachment and gratitude.

With regard to M. Deshaizes, nothing can be kinder than what you propose to do for him. He was authorized by the king to write, under my dictation, all the secret negotiations with Vienna when I had sole charge of them; he has since had my entire confidence in the most secret affairs. I cannot speak to you too highly of him. I have here many memorials on a number of interesting subjects relating to the ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which I will have him make copies and extracts for you. It is just that a man employed for seven years in important public affairs should have some recompense; he was on the schedule for a gratuity of two thousand crowns a year. As to this, you will do what seems to you proper. In the end you will have more than one occasion to fix his career without charge to the royal treasury.

You could do nothing for me that I have so much at heart as the affair of my two secretaries. As for that of my pension of minister, I am very sorry you have heard nothing about it; you would have felt that it was a matter of honour, not interest. But we will talk about this when circumstances are more favourable.

Several of the foreign ministers have written me good wishes for the new year. I have the honour to tell you that I have answered them simply in new-year style. I believe that you will not be uneasy as to my fidelity in keeping aloof from all tincture of public affairs.

As for the Palais-Bourbon, if the king destines it for some one else, I wish His Majesty would buy the furniture, which is all made to fit the rooms. There is nothing in the king's *garde-meuble* which could go there. I have many debts to pay, of which I was ignorant; for three years I have not looked into my affairs; and that sale would stop up many gaps.

For the rest, I am so at my ease with you, and I rely so much upon your friendship for me, that I shall have recourse to you alone when the time comes, to get me out of this rôle of ambitious claimant [*prétendant*] which they seem determined to make me play. My age, the places that I have already filled, and my red hat, furnish a good text for doing so. I own to you that the idea of that future is intolerable to me. Having no sort of pretension myself, I do not like the ridicule of being thought a pretender. I know, besides, the danger of it, and that danger I wish to avoid. You will think this over at your leisure, and tell me afterwards your thoughts about it.

The favours the king proposes to show to the pope's chamberlain will have a good effect in Rome and do honour to you. I shall be very glad to see him here whenever that is proper.

It is impossible, Monsieur le duc, to add to my sincere attachment to you.

Madame de Pompadour has sent me news of herself; she is out of her trouble.

CXII.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, January 26, 1759.

M. Le Brun has written to me, Monsieur le duc, part of a conversation which you have had with him about me; he will tell me more when he comes here. I find that your way of thinking agrees with the idea that I have always had; it is that which is becoming to a man of rank and integrity.

I beg you not to forget the offer you made me of replacing M. Deshaizes on the muster-roll of the ministry; it is just that he should be rewarded for his services; it is, besides, suitable (independently of friendship) that a man like you should do a thing so infinitely agreeable to your predecessor.

Nothing can be added to the feelings of attachment which I have for you, Monsieur le duc.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.

CXIII.

May 4, 1759.

I send M. Deshaizes, Monsieur le duc, to pay his court to you, and at the same time I offer you my thanks for all the proofs of friendship and interest which you have given him in regard to me on his last two journeys to Versailles. I have heard the same from various sources, the last being M. de Montazet. The latter told me of your very obliging offers for all that concerned me, and in particular that in regard to my receiving here the persons whose presence would be most agreeable to me. As I do not as yet understand my situation at Court, I shall not make (in regard to my liberty) any request that might seem premature or indiscreet.

It is on my friends, but especially on you, who give me so many proofs of friendship and are more in the way of knowing favourable moments than any one, that I shall rely in this matter. In any case I could receive but very few persons here, because my house is filled by my family and I have only two vacant rooms for strangers.

With regard to Paris (when the time comes), I should not wish to go there for more than forty-eight hours, whether for my health or for business; because my resolution is firmly taken to make my home in my little château of Vic-sur-Aisne. It is the only residence which, under the circumstances, suits me in all respects.

M. Deshaizes told me, some time ago, of what you said to him *about Rome*. On that subject I shall rely wholly on what you may decide, as much from confidence in your friendship as from deference to your advice. For my part, I am thinking only of attaching myself to my profession, and of giving to the course I may take in that respect all the time, reflection, and integrity which are demanded by my principles and my character. Nevertheless, I shall always be ready to serve the king whenever you think that I could be useful to him. It is in my heart to desire this, but my situation does not allow me to ask it. When I say "serve the king," I do not mean (as you can well believe) an office at Court, for as to that I have neither plan nor hope.

The nuncio, to whom I sent M. Deshaizes with my compliments, supposing him to be on the point of departure, had a conversation with the latter, which he will have the honour to relate to you.

You know me, Monsieur le duc; you know that I am honest and frank; therefore I count upon the friendship you promise me, and certainly you can put entire confidence in

my way of thinking about you; you may feel assured of my unchangeable attachment.

CXIV.

June 15, 1759.

I received yesterday, Monsieur le duc, the letter which you intrusted to M. Deshaizes, and which he brought me on his return from Chartres; it demands a prompt reply on my part, and with thanks.

You have given me great pleasure in letting me know that there is neither bitterness nor animosity against me at Court; but as they do not yet do the justice that I feel is due to my way of thinking, and my character (in regard to present matters), I believe it to be wiser not to profit as yet by the offer you make me of obtaining permission for my friends to come and see me. There might be embarrassments, and also annoyance arising from such visits; I did not charge M. de Montazet to speak to you of this. Though my life is not amusing, it is sweet and pleasant; for I have my family united around me, and I shall wait till the door opens wide before seeing other persons than my relatives. I do not doubt that you will seize any favourable moment to advance that period; as my successor and my friend, that kind action can only do you honour among honest men.

Nothing could be more sensible than what you say to me as to the idea you have of sending me to Rome after the return of M. de Laon. I feel the solidity of your reasons, and your motives are very honourable towards me. This project, which has entered the head of many persons, had already caused various impertinent remarks about me, attributing to me views and intentions very contrary to my character and principles; it is this which gave me a sort

of repugnance to the idea; but that no longer exists, now that the idea and the execution of the project belong to you wholly; therefore, I have only to thank you with all my heart for what you will think proper to do in the matter when the time arrives. I see that you are becoming as philosophical as I expected you would; I hope, however, that you will not become too much so; for in that case the idea you have for me would not have the same solidity, nor the same charms.

I do not expect any answer to this letter, and I reserve hearing news of you till M. Deshaizes returns from paying you his court.

You know, Monsieur le duc, my friendship and attachment to you; they will not change.

CXV.

Vic-sur-Aisne, April 29, 1760.

M. de Montazet has told me, Monsieur le duc, of the kind answer you made to him in regard to me when he asked permission to see me on his way back from Lyon; I give you my sincere thanks. The Comte de Narbonne has also told me of other very friendly things on your part. Though I have never doubted the friendship you promised me, I am very glad to receive, from time to time, such testimony of it.

My health, which I thought last summer was entirely restored, has had some rather violent attacks in the winter. It is the old trouble of the nerves, which still torment me. The doctors decided that I ought to go this summer and take certain baths and waters; but before making up my mind to such a removal, I prefer to try asses' milk, which they order through the fine weather, and turtle-broth in

September. If all that does not cure me, I must resolve to follow the doctors' advice, and in that case I shall ask permission to go to some baths next spring, so as not to let an ailment which might become distressing and dangerous take deeper root. Happily, for the last two weeks, I feel better.

I count, Monsieur le duc, on being able this year to take advantage, without impropriety, of the offer you made me last year, namely: to ask the king for the necessary permissions to enable such of my friends as desire to come and stay with me from time to time to do so. I will, in consequence, tell them to address themselves to you to obtain these permissions.

Be assured, Monsieur le duc, that I shall be ever faithful to the sincere attachment I have promised you for life.

CXVI.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, June 10, 1760.

I have many thanks to send you, Monsieur le duc, for the friendship with which you undertake to obtain for me the permissions which I need for my health's sake and for the pleasures of my life. I owe you still more gratitude for the other matters of which you treat in the last letter with which you have honoured me.

MM. de Montazet and de Narbonne knew nothing of the *Rome idea;* and I thought I ought not to speak of it to my friends until you permitted me to do so. You will remember that in adopting that idea I left to you alone the time and method of its execution. I have not changed my wishes in that respect, thinking the idea suitable in every respect, and for the same reasons that made you think of it more than a year ago. But I have thought that a residence in Rome should be allied with a see in France.

All sensible men among the clergy advise me to bind myself wholly to my profession. Going as a priest to Rome, I should certainly have more consideration if I were a bishop also. Moreover, with the nervous illness to which I am subject, the climate of Italy might prove contrary to my health, and I should then be much embarrassed if I had not the decent and honourable asylum of a diocese.

It seems to me also that nothing could be more satisfactory to all parties than such a permanent retirement far from Paris. The king is kind; he cannot wish that I should be a prisoner all my life; no means of release could be pleasanter, or more suitable, than dwelling in a diocese. You are very right, Monsieur le duc, in thinking that it is not a matter of indifference in what province that diocese should be; and since you wish me to express myself plainly on that subject I will tell you that Lisieux and Condom seem to me equally suitable. But a regard to climate, to the vicinity of the baths which are ordered for me, the small extent of the diocese, the nature of the inhabitants (which I know), and, above all, the greater distance from Paris, would make Condom infinitely more agreeable to me than Lisieux.

With regard to the embarrassment it would cause the king to have me appear before him to take the oath, it is easy to remove that difficulty. It would be the same if I went to Rome, for I could not, of course, leave France without taking formal leave of His Majesty. But in the case of a bishopric, it would be easy for the king to give me, for example, that of Condom without my being obliged to appear before him; nor would that deflection from the usual custom seem anything extraordinary.

Should the king decide to appoint me to that bishopric you will have the kindness to give me timely notice of it. I should then ask leave to go to the baths of Cotterets and

Bagnères, which are ordered for me; I could spend some time with my family in Languedoc, and receive the king's appointment in Lyon, where I ought to stop out of respect to my Chapter. I could there, on the arrival of my bulls, take the usual oaths from the hands of Maréchal de Thomond, or any other whom the king might commission for this purpose; there are examples of commissions given in that way, and nothing is against it in the articles. My oath received by a commissioner of the king would be equally enregistered in the Chambre des Comptes.

I cannot better reply, Monsieur le duc, to the frank and honest manner with which you have opened yourself to me, than by thus entering with you into all these details. I will add that, if you think proper to ask the king to give me the bishopric of Condom, I would like you to have the kindness to tell the Comte de Narbonne, my relation and friend, exactly what I must do in deference to the Bishop of Orléans; I mean not only what is due to the place he occupies, but particularly to the friendship which has existed between us for the last thirty years. M. de Narbonne will receive your instructions and will do, on my behalf, towards the Bishop of Orléans whatever you are kind enough to dictate to him.

For the rest, if the king is not willing, under the circumstances, to appoint me to the bishopric of either Condom or Lisieux, I will ask you not to change your decision in regard to the *ministry of Rome*, which I will accept in any case, unless my health should prove a veritable obstacle. You have been willing to exhibit your friendship for me; it is in your character and your principles to give me such marks of it. You see that my wishes all tend to a tranquil, honourable life; and that distance from Paris, far from alarming me, has charms and advantages which I like. I beg

of you, therefore, to act in this matter zealously; fortunately for me, with the best will in the world, you have also the necessary power and influence.

I shall hear from M. de Narbonne the result of your resolutions; and I will then make my own arrangements in consequence. You know my way of thinking, and you can never doubt, Monsieur le duc, that my friendship, my attachment, and my gratitude are eternal.

CXVII.

VIC-SUR-AISNE, July 8, 1760.

I have received, Monsieur le duc, by the Comte de Narbonne, the letter which you did me the honour to write to me on the 27th of last month.

Though your many attempts for me have not had the success your friendship desired, I have none the less seen with satisfaction that the king does justice to my sentiments and to the purity of my intentions; and also that you think His Majesty's reluctance to appoint me to a bishopric at the present moment may not be invincible under other circumstances. I learn of this refusal without pain, because I had accepted with gratitude, but without eagerness, the very kindly proposal you made to ask for a diocese for me. My principles on the affairs of the Church are sufficiently well-known; also my aloofness from all intrigue and all party interests. I shall therefore wait, without impatience, until the king shall deign to render the rest of my life useful to the Church, and I shall take the Orders of the priesthood at the period which I fixed last year.

I shall solicit your friendship no longer, Monsieur le duc; for I think I should insult it, and that I ought to rely entirely on the fresh assurances that you give me of it.

M. de Narbonne, in whom I have true confidence because I know the uprightness of his heart and the wisdom of his mind, is well aware of the state of my health and of the sort of freedom and movement which I need, to avoid, if possible, the attacks which I had last winter. He will not fail to explain them to you.

I beg you, Monsieur le duc, to feel convinced that you have no one more faithfully attached to you than I.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS.[1]

[1] See Appendix II.

APPENDIX I.

LOUISE-ÉLISABETH DE FRANCE, eldest twin daughter of Louis XV., married to the Infant Don Philip, Duke of Parma, was a woman of great capacity and energy in managing the family affairs of herself and a very incompetent husband, her letters to whom have been published under the title of "Lettres d'une Fille de France." Perrin et Cie: Paris, 1884.

The advancement of this daughter was Louis XV.'s chief motive in forming the Austrian alliance; and his object in the "Seven Years' War" was the hope held out to him of obtaining for her husband and herself the sovereignty of the Low Countries. Bernis alludes to this in several of his letters as a part of the secret treaty with the Court of Vienna. It brought him into close and respectful friendship with Madame Infanta (as she was called), and into constant correspondence with herself and her husband.

Madame Infanta died of small-pox during a visit to Versailles, December 2d, 1759. Bernis was then in exile, but in frequent correspondence with Queen Marie Leczinska, the Dauphin, and the Duke of Parma, from whom he received the following letter after his wife's death: —

"SALA, December 22, 1759.

"I received your two letters, Monsieur, in a terrible moment. It is that which has kept me from replying sooner. Judge of my sorrow: I do not know how I can bear it. Nothing but the love I have for my children sustains me in the dejection in which I am. They have forced me to come here to breathe a purer air; but I am as shut up here as I was in Parma, and wherever I may go I shall bear the memory of what was dearest to me in the world. Adieu, Monsieur; keep your health, and think sometimes of the unhappy man who will be your friend to his grave."

APPENDIX II.

CARDINAL DE BERNIS' published Correspondence ends here. On the 10th of June, 1764, he was appointed to the archbishopric of Alby, a see made vacant by the promotion of the Duc de Choiseul's brother, the then incumbent, to the archbishopric of Cambrai. The king, who had already thought of this appointment himself, was strongly urged to bestow it by his daughters, Mesdames de France, always warmly attached to the cardinal. The Bishop of Orléans, incited by the Duc de Choiseul, also proposed the appointment to the king, and the thing was done.

Bernis remained in his diocese, making short visits to Versailles and Paris, where the king received him well, and the people with enthusiasm, until 1769, when the order to attend the Conclave after the death of Pope Clement XIII. reached him, February 13. There he was largely instrumental in electing Ganganelli, under the title of Pope Clement XIV.

When he left France to attend the Conclave he had no idea that he should remain in Rome. The project of his ministry there, broached to him in 1760 by the Duc de Choiseul, had long been abandoned. But on the 10th of April he received a despatch from the Duc de Choiseul offering him that embassy. This was followed by a letter from the king himself:[1] —

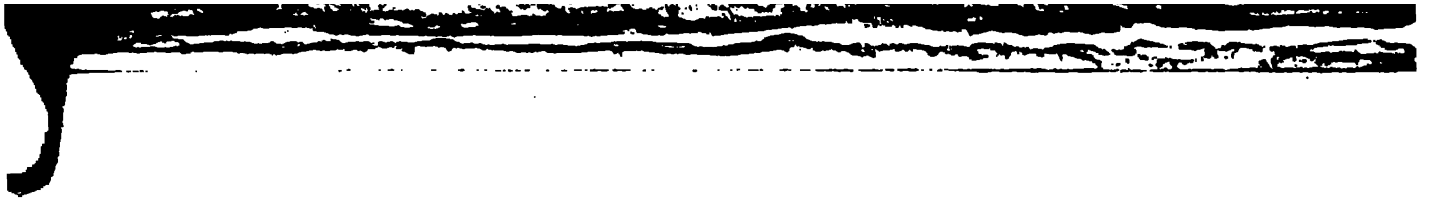
MY COUSIN: MARLY, June 18, 1769.

This will be different from the last [letter] that I wrote to you. The good of my service, and that of religion, require that you shall stay in Rome, where you will know how to conciliate the Priesthood and the Empire, as you have been minister of the one, and are that of the other; and I therefore rely on you. I permit you also to write to me, and I shall be very glad to have a commerce of letters direct to me from you. I shall not let you die a

[1] From "Cardinal de Bernis depuis son Ministère" par Frédéric Masson. Paris: E Plon et Cie. 1884.

bankrupt. Rely on me. If I did not continue your pension as minister, it was because I thought the benefices I had given you were fully the equivalent; and moreover, you know the state of the Royal Treasury, which obliged me to restrain myself as much as possible. Thus you must not blame any one. I have returned to you all my good-will. You have just rendered, I hope, a great service to religion. Count upon me.

LOUIS.



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